

Living in English: *Getting Acquainted*





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Getting to Know Your Classmates – Practice Making Questions

Directions: First make questions for the phrases below. Write the questions in the space provided. Then practice asking and answering the questions with the students in your group, using the chart on the following page.

1. Ex. Country of origin / Nationality

Where are you from? What's your nationality?

2. Arrival in country or how long in country

3. Language(s)

4. Marital Status

5. Occupation in your country

6. Work now

7. Family

8. Hobbies

9. Favorite food

10. Birthday



Getting To Know Your Classmates – Conversation Practice

Directions: Complete the chart below by asking your classmates questions.

Name	Classmate (1)	Classmate (2)	Classmate (3)
Nationality			
Arrival in country			
Languages			
Marital Status			
Occupation in own country			
Work now			
Family			
Hobbies			
Favorite food			
Birthday			



Shared Readings – Pair Work – Student A

Directions: You and your partner each have a different reading. Read your passage first. Then ask your partner the questions below about his/her passage. When you have finished, try to write a short paragraph about your partner's passage from the information you have received.

Student A - Maria Pedrido

Maria Pedrido was born in Spain on April 2, 1959. She came to this country three years ago. She is married and has three children, a daughter and two sons. In Spain, Maria and her husband were both doctors. Now they are studying English and hoping to return to their professions soon. In their spare time, Maria and her husband, Jose, like to go hiking with their children, go for long bike rides and listen to music. Maria is a wonderful cook and every weekend she makes her favorite food, a traditional Spanish dish called paella. Maria speaks three languages, English, Spanish and French. She tries to speak to her children in Spanish, but most of the time, they prefer to speak English. Maria is worried that her children might forget their native language.

A. Questions About Your Partner's Reading Passage.

1. Where is Kenji Saito from? _____
2. When is his birthday? _____
3. When did he come to this country? _____
4. Does he have family here? _____
5. What did he do in Japan? _____
6. What does he do here? _____
7. What is Kenji's favorite food? _____
8. What does he like to do in his spare time? _____
9. What is he hoping to have soon? _____
10. What is he worried about? _____

B. In your notebook, write a short paragraph about Kenji Saito, using the information your partner has given you.



Shared Readings – Pair Work – Student B

Directions: You and your partner each have a different reading. Read your passage first. Then ask your partner the questions below about his/her passage. When you have finished, try to write a short paragraph about your partner's passage from the information you have received.

Student B – Kenji Saito

Kenji Saito was born in Japan on December 16, 1972. Kenji decided to move to this country two years ago, but he didn't actually come until six months ago. Kenji worked as an English teacher in Japan. Now he is working here in a high school, teaching Japanese. Kenji has been married for two years. He met his wife when she went to Japan to teach English. She wanted to return home, so that is why they are living here now. They don't have any children yet, but are hoping to start a family soon. Kenji usually plays tennis and golf in his free time. On the weekends he often goes out for his favorite food, pizza and beer. Kenji is worried that if he keeps doing that, he might get fat.

A. Questions About Your Partner's Reading Passage

1. How long has Maria Pedrido been here? _____
2. What are Maria's hobbies? _____
3. What languages does Maria speak? _____
4. What did Maria do in her country? _____
5. What is Maria hoping to do in this country? _____
6. What is Maria's favorite food? _____
7. How many children does Maria have? _____
8. What is Maria worried about? _____
9. Why is she worried about this? _____
10. Where is Maria from? _____

B. In your notebook, write a short paragraph about Maria Pedrido, using the information your partner has given you.



Language – Vocabulary, Expressions and Idioms

Introductions

- Maria, I'd like to introduce you to Kenji.
- Maria, I'd like you to meet Kenji.
- How do you do. (More formal)
- It's nice to meet you.
- I'm pleased to meet you.
- I'm happy to meet you.
- Glad to meet you.

Informal Greetings

- Hello/Hi
- Hi, how's it going?
- Hello, how are you?
- Hi, what's up?
- Hi, how are you doing?

Vocabulary, Idioms and Expressions

1. **to get acquainted** – to meet someone, to get to know someone
2. **to break the ice** – to make the atmosphere warmer or more friendly
3. **small talk** – talk about unimportant topics such as the weather; informal conversation
4. **to talk shop** – to talk about work-related topics in a social situation
5. **rude** – not polite
6. **etiquette** – accepted rules of behavior among people in a social group
7. **gestures** – body language
8. **greetings** – words or actions used when you see or meet someone
9. **nickname** – a shortened name or different name used instead of a person's first name
10. **surname** – last name or family name
11. **maiden name** – the family name of a woman before she marries
12. **to address someone** – to speak to someone using a name or title
13. **title** – a word used to show a person's position, occupation, status
14. **When in Rome, do as the Romans do** – when you are a visitor in another country, you should follow the customs of that country
15. **universal** – the same all over the world



Reading and Discussion

The way people greet and address each other is not universal. In fact, greetings, gestures, use of names and titles, and general rules of etiquette differ from country to country and culture to culture.

Greetings in some countries take the form of a handshake; in other countries people may bow, hug, kiss on the cheek, press fists together, or even rub noses. In some countries, people greet their friends, relatives, and business associates in the same way. In other countries, people have different greetings for people in different positions. In Canada and United States, men usually shake hands the first time they meet one another. Women may or may not do so in a social setting, although they often do so in a business environment.

The way people use names and titles also differs from country to country. North Americans usually use first names, even often in the workplace or in formal settings. People of the same age use first names and often nicknames. An employer, a teacher, a client, or an older person that you do not know very well is usually addressed as Mr. or Mrs. with the last name, unless that person invites you to use his/her first name. In some countries titles are considered very important when addressing people, but in North America they are not. One title that is very common is Dr. (doctor). This is used to address people with medical degrees or PhD. degrees.

Making eye contact when speaking to someone is considered important in North America, but in some Asian countries, this may be considered rude. Even the distance we maintain between two people when having a conversation can vary from culture to culture. It is also important to know that some topics of conversation may be acceptable small talk in one culture, but unacceptable in another. The best way to learn the etiquette of a culture is to observe the people who are a part of it.



Vocabulary Review

Choose the correct word or expression from the list below to complete the following sentences.

universal - gestures - address - maiden name - surname - nickname - greeting etiquette
rude - talk shop - small talk - break the ice - get acquainted - title

1. All the office workers are planning a party for the weekend. They have been working so hard for the past month. They really need to relax and forget about work. They have all promised not to _____ at the party.
2. When Susan gets married next month, she plans to keep her _____. She doesn't want to take her husband's family name.
3. Playing a game is a good way to _____ at a party when some of the people don't know each other.
4. His real name is Robert, but most people call him by his _____, which is Bobby.
5. Although love is a _____ feeling, the way people express it may differ in different countries.
6. If you want to succeed in doing business in another country, it is important to know the _____ of that country.
7. We weren't talking about anything important. We were just making _____ about the weather.
8. On many application forms, you have to put your _____ before your given name.
9. _____ can vary from country to country. For example, nodding your head does not mean the same thing in every country.
10. His _____ is president of the company. Hers is vice-president.
11. In North America, most co-workers _____ one another by their first names.
12. In some countries, it is _____ to blow your nose in public.
13. On the first day of class the teacher wanted the students to _____, so she put them in small groups and asked them to have a short conversation.
14. A handshake is a common form of _____.



Find Someone Who...

Find someone who:

1. has a birthday this month. _____
2. has been in this country less than six months. _____
3. has a nickname. _____
4. (whose) favorite food is pasta. _____
5. can speak three languages. _____
6. likes to play the piano. _____
7. has a part-time job. _____
8. has three children. _____
9. has been married less than a year. _____
10. is worried about something now. _____
11. knows how to play tennis. _____
12. bows in his/her country when meeting a new person. _____
13. had his/her own business in his/her country. _____



TEACHER'S NOTES / ANSWER KEY

These activities are designed for low-intermediate level adult ESL learners; however, with some modification, they may also be suitable for upper-beginner through upper-intermediate levels.

Warm Up, Introduction

You can begin by writing on the board the expressions: getting acquainted and breaking the ice. Ask the students if anyone knows the meaning of the two idioms. Give examples; elicit ideas. Explain to the class that the first few lessons will be spent getting to know each other and getting comfortable with one another. Find out which students already know one another. Bring a world map to class and give the students colored push pins to mark their country of origin on the map. Allow free discussion while they are doing this.

Getting to know your Classmates - Practice Making Questions

As a group activity, ask the students to make questions for the words given. Ask different students to provide the questions. When the students have written the correct question on the worksheet, practice them orally.

Getting to know your Classmates - Conversation Practice

Break the class into groups of three and have the students complete the chart that is provided. While they are sharing information about themselves, they will be practicing the questions from the previous activity. When the chart is complete, have each student introduce one member of his group to the class, using the expressions from the language section. Have each student share three pieces of information about their classmate. Ex. I'd like to introduce you to my new friend, Gustavo. He came here two months ago from Chili with his wife and family. Gustavo was an engineer in Chili.

Pair Work - Shared Readings

Break the class into pairs. Give one student Reading Passage A and the other B. Have them read their individual passages silently, then share the information with their partner by answering the questions on the sheet. Review with the class as a whole by asking different students questions from the readings. Have a few students try to provide as much information as possible about the passages from memory. For homework, or as a class assignment, have each student write a short paragraph about the partner's passage.

After the students have finished writing their paragraphs, give them a copy of the original passage to read. As a follow-up writing activity, have the students write paragraphs about themselves.

Reading A - answers

1. Maria Pedrido has been here for 3 years.
2. Maria's hobbies are: hiking, biking and listening to music.
3. Maria speaks three languages, English, Spanish, French.
4. Maria was a doctor in her country.
5. She hopes to return to her profession.
6. Her favorite food is paella.
7. Maria has three children.
8. Maria is worried that her children might forget their native language.
9. Because her children prefer to speak English at home.
10. Maria is from Spain.

**Reading B - answers**

1. Kenji Saito is from Japan.
2. His birthday is on December 16, 1972.
3. He came to this country 6 month ago.
4. Kenji has his wife here.
5. Kenji was an English teacher in Japan.
6. He is a Japanese teacher here.
7. Kenji's favorite food is pizza and beer.
8. In his spare time he likes to play tennis and golf.
9. Kenji is hoping to start a family soon.
10. Kenji is worried that he might get fat.

Language Development - Vocabulary, Expressions, Idioms

Go over the language section on introductions and greetings and practice orally. Introduce the vocabulary and idioms, use them in context, give examples, elicit examples from the students.

Reading and Discussion

Have students take turns reading the passage aloud and monitor pronunciation. Check for comprehension, by asking questions. (Ex. What are some different ways people greet each other? Is eye contact during conversation polite in all countries, etc.) Again, divide the class into groups of three or four, trying to mix cultural backgrounds. Have the students discuss the questions in their groups. When the group work is completed, share some of the information with the class as a whole. You can ask one student from each group to report back, or allow a freer forum of discussion.

Vocabulary Review

With the class as a whole, review the meanings of the words in italics on the worksheet. Have the students work individually to complete the sheet. Review as a group. For homework, you may ask the students to write sentences of their own using the vocabulary.

Answers: 1. talk shop 2. maiden name 3. break the ice 4. nickname 5. universal 6. etiquette 7. small talk 8. surname 9. gestures 10. title 11. address 12. rude 13. get acquainted 14. greeting

Group Interaction and Question Formation - "Find Someone Who.."

Distribute the worksheet. Have the students write the questions before they begin the oral practice and review the questions together. This will ensure they are asking the questions correctly as they circulate around the room. Have the students circulate around the class asking the questions on the sheet. When the student finds a classmate who can answer the question, he will then write the student's name on the line and followup with one more question of his/her own. Ex. "Do you have a birthday this month?" - If the student answers "yes", the second question might be: "When is it?" or "What do you want for your birthday?" Try to encourage the students to engage in real conversation during this activity. Follow up by sharing the information with the whole class. This activity provides a good opportunity for the students to learn their classmates' names.