

# HOW TO TEACH PRESENT SIMPLE TO COMPLETE BEGINNERS

BY ANDREI ZAKHAREUSKI



Introduction



Pre-teach Pronouns



Eliciting

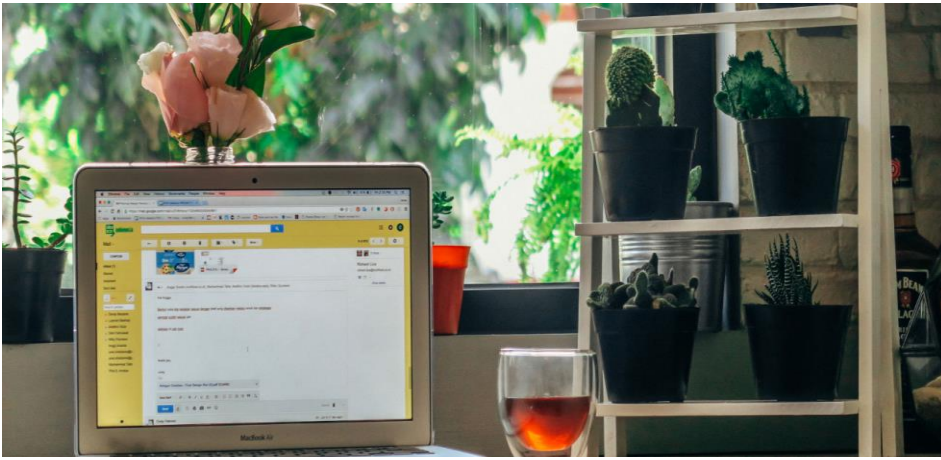
Names



Practice Time

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At the outset new students are convinced that they cannot communicate in English at all, but by the end of this lesson they will hopefully be able to confidently introduce themselves to anyone they meet in a simple and yet meaningful way.

# 1

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## Introduction

There is no warm up activity to introduce any grammatical term or vocabulary. Assume that your students have limited linguistic knowledge, or none whatsoever.

**Write the substitution tables on the board.** Get it right from the start. Make sure they have a model to practice and follow. Maybe they know the structures already but it's good to reinforce the grammar and if they are real novices they will need to follow your guidance. Keep it basic. You are teaching the verbs 'to be' and 'to do' only – which will form the foundations of their learning.

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# 2

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## Pre-teach Pronouns

Ensure they know [pronouns](#) or you will be wasting a lot of valuable time. Use gestures, mime, [pictures](#) etc. to elicit or re-iterate grammar outlines. There is often confusion with the masculine/feminine form. Teach '*I am. You are (singular). He/She/It is. We are. You are. They are (plurals).*' Show contractions – '*I'm etc.*'

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# 3

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## Eliciting Names

You write your name on the whiteboard. First name only. Ask your students ‘*What’s my name?*’ ‘*What is my name?*’ Repeat. You may get a whole host of answers ‘*Michael/You are Michael/You’re Michael/Your name is Michael/Mr Michael/Teacher Michael* etc. Correct the errors and write clearly on the board ‘*My name is Michael.*’ ‘*I am Michael. I’m Michael*’ Teacher models Q & A. Ask all the students their names – going randomly around the class. Make sure that there is plenty of movement and friendly gesturing with an open hand. **No pointing.** Get your students motivated and animated. Stress that you need first names only. It’s much more friendly. Now introduce family names. Write your name on the board – *Angelo*. Then present the full sentence ‘*My name is Michael Angelo.*’ Advise your students that this is the standard format in English, as there are cultural differences e.g. in Japan the surname precedes the given name. Repeat the exercise with all the students - ‘*What’s my name?*’ Get full and abbreviated answers. Repeat many times around the class.

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# 4

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## Practice Time

‘*What’s his name?*’ ‘*What’s her name?*’ Get students up and doing a [mingling activity](#). Get them to report back to you the names they have learned. This is fun, practical and breaks the ice in a new group. Can they remember the people they have been introduced to? This is the time to

check. Practice for as long as you feel necessary. Don't assume they have mastered this first step easily, as you will often find later that the elementary work is quickly forgotten.

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## 5

### Review on the Board

Ensure you match your spoken practice with written examples. Do concept checking for your question practice. '*What's his name?*' Show contractions on the board. '*His name is ...*' or '*He's ....*' Ask your group to chorally answer/move around the class and ask students randomly.

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## 6

### Explaining Jobs

Ask the class "*What do I do?*" "*What's my job?*" As students answer, make sure you write the answer on the board for future reference. '*You are an English Teacher.*' Get them to repeat and point out the '*an*' article if it has been omitted. Ask all the students individually '*What do you do?*' You may not be able to elicit, so you will have to introduce the relevant vocabulary. It would be useful to have pictures, or flashcards of popular jobs to provide a point of reference especially for visual learners. Get your students to answer correctly and move pairs around to incorporate group practice. Ask and report back their findings. Teacher asks group members as a whole and then calls randomly on specific students e.g. '*What does Manuel do?*' Response – '*He's an engineer.*' Practice/drill articles '*a*' and '*an.*'

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# 7

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## Describing where you live

Ask your students '*Where do I live?*' Use body language and drawings to show your home's location. The students probably don't know, so you want them to ask and therefore elicit the question '*Where do you live?*' Demonstrate on the board the word order. The name of your street, etc. - the smallest place first – village/town/city. Get students to ask their partners and then practice by doing a milling activity. Get feedback. Students report back where the other students live. '*She lives in ....*' Be alert because the preposition is often missed or dropped

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# 8

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## Introduce hobbies

'*What do you do in your free time?*' Elicit hobbies vocabulary from students and write on the whiteboard. Have pictures/ flashcards etc.

**Use gestures and mime. Have fun but focus on simplicity.**

Like/do/enjoy differences in nuance will pass over their heads at this level. Concentrate on the verb '*to be*' as before only at this stage and give models through presentation. 'My hobby is tennis' etc. Get students to ask their partners. Ensure there is feedback time to the group and the teacher.

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# 9

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## Consolidation of Material Learned

Write the 4 questions on the whiteboard and model answers.

1. What's your name?
2. What do you do?
3. Where do you live?
4. What do you do in your free time?

Drill the students chorally and individually. Questions followed by answers/alternate roles/ask randomly. Ensure that the students are quite clear on the 4 questions and there are no errors in their answers. Practice and repeat as necessary. Give feedback and rectify errors using examples on the whiteboard.

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# D

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## Live Practice and Feedback

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Students must introduce themselves to everyone in the class. Set the scenario with mime etc. – *‘Imagine you are at a party and meeting for the first time. You must talk to all your class members.’* Teacher walks around monitoring and giving assistance when required. Error spotting/correcting. Focus on fluency rather than accuracy, unless mistakes are too blatant. Final error rectification and exempling on the board before students must act independently.

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# 11

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## **Brief Individual Presentation and Closure**

The students introduce themselves to the class using the 4 sentences learned and practiced. *‘Hello. My name is ... I’m ...a/an ... I live in ... My hobby is ...* Aim for fluency rather than accuracy, as this is a big step and a major accomplishment for absolute beginners. Randomly ask students any of the 4 questions. Assign homework practice and advise that the next lesson will begin with the self-introductions covered. Stand at the door and ask students 1 of the 4 questions, as they exit to give them a sense of real achievement.

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