

Lesson: Find Out If

This lesson is based on the idea that we all have exciting stories to tell. Although it's similar to the traditional "Find Someone Who," the focus here is not to write down a name and "win" the game. Rather, it's for students to find out about their classmates personal stories and experiences.

- **Skills:** Speaking
- **Levels:** Intermediate through advanced
- **Materials:** Copies of the [Classroom Handout](#), one for each student
- **Preparation:** 5 minutes
- **Time:** 45-60 minutes

Directions: Introduce the topic by asking the class how much they really know about each other. How much do they know about their teachers? Which student has a tattoo, for example? (Don't tell--even if no one has a tattoo, it will get their imaginations going.) Pass out copies of the classroom handout and go over any unknown vocabulary. You may also want to do a brief grammatical review of present perfect vs. simple past. Remind students that conversation is quick and fluid. (I actually teach the no gap/no overlap rule.) Tell students that they are going to find out which of their classmates have had these exciting experiences. They can ask anyone in the class any question; if the person says "yes," they need to ask at least three follow-up questions to get the story.

Instruct students to get up and start asking questions. They do not have to start at number one, nor do they have to get through all of the questions on the list. Instead, they should choose the ideas they find the most intriguing and use these as the starting point for good conversations.

Students should very quickly become engaged in telling their personal stories. During this time, you can circulate and encourage individual students to elaborate on their experiences.

With about ten minutes left in the lesson, call the class back together. Ask individual students to report on the most interesting/surprising/exciting story that they heard. Encourage students to retell the story, asking the original classmate for clarifications if necessary. You could also ask for a report back on one of the topics. For example "Did anyone find a classmate who has a tattoo?"

Encourage students to continue their conversations outside of class.

Lessons: The Expert Game

This in-class activity is near foolproof. The activity rests on the idea that students have a lot to say when they're talking about something they're interested in and passionate about. It works best with an even number of students, 8-14 total. Nevertheless, it could be used in much larger classrooms with a few adaptations.

- **Skills:** Speaking
- **Levels:** High-beginner through advanced
- **Materials:** Copies of the [Classroom Handout](#), one for each student (You may have to cut this sheet to get "page two" on the back.)
- **Preparation:** 5 minutes
- **Time:** 60-90 minutes

Directions: Introduce the lesson by writing the word "expert" on the board and eliciting a definition. Then write the expression "jack of all trades," and provide a personal example of someone you know. I use my brother for this one. I say something like, "My brother really is a jack of all trades. He's interested in a lot of different things. He knows a lot about a lot of different things. For example, he went to university for nuclear engineering, so he knows a lot about science. He worked for the government as an engineer. Later, he got an MBA, so he knows a lot about business. He's certified to scuba dive, and has thought about opening his own diving shop. He likes to ski. He can cook. He makes a lot of different types of food. He can fix things in the house when they break. Also, he likes to travel, and he's been to more than 40 different countries, and he really enjoys history, especially American history. So there's a lot of different things my brother is good at." By now, the students understand what the expression means (and the women are asking whether or not my brother is single).

Next, call on individual students. Ask them if they are jacks of all trades. Ask what they've studied, what they're interested in. After you've asked a few students, tell students to think of five things they're interested in. Remind students that these things should be varied ("Playing soccer, playing tennis, and swimming are all one category: sports.") At this point, you may want to do a brief grammatical review on the use of gerunds to describe activities. Next, pass out the copies. As the students are writing, circulate and check for correct grammar. Encourage variety on the responses.

Now, tell students to choose three of these things to rewrite at the bottom. They are going to be the classroom expert on these three things.

Once students have finished listing their three areas of expertise, instruct them to fold their papers in half separating the two lists. Now divide the class into As and Bs. As will be the first group of classroom experts. Bs will be the first group of questioners. As will remain at their desks. Bs will circulate.

Have all the Bs put their papers aside and stand up. Ask them to arrange the desks so that every student who is still sitting has a desk directly facing him/her. Now, tell the Bs to wander around

and sit down in front of an A. They should read As topics and ask about something they're interested in.

You should find that the conversation gets going immediately. If your class is an uneven number, you can play too. Otherwise, you can just join different pairs and monitor.

After about 5-7 minutes call "Change!" The Bs stand up again, circulate, and choose a new partner for conversation.

Halfway through the time for your lesson, the As sit down with their sheets. They are now the classroom experts. The Bs get up and circulate, asking questions of the As.

Allow 3-5 minutes at the end of class for synthesis. Bring the class back together. Call on individual students to report on what they've learned. Encourage them to continue their conversations outside of class.

Lessons: I've Never

Level: Intermediate-advanced

Grammar: Present perfect and simple past

Directions: First, do a model round. Instead of using alcohol, I've heard you can use pennies or nickels to make this one fun. Start out by telling the class something you've never done. For example, "I've never been to India." Anyone who has been to India must tell the story. After they tell the story and their classmates ask follow-up questions, they receive a penny. Play continues to the right as the next person says, "I've never..." Again, students who have done this receive a penny. Once the students have gotten the idea, put them in groups to continue the activity. (You could continue to play as a whole class, but there's more time for language production if they're in groups.) At the end, see who has the most pennies and joke about this person being the most experienced.

Variation: A much faster version, may be better for grammatical review than conversation practice. Play this as a whole class game. Start with everyone standing up. Students sit down if they've never done something. Those standing should tell their stories to the whole class. The person with the most experience is the only one left standing. That person wins the game.

Lessons: Class Discussion

Time: 90 Minutes

Level: Intermediate-advanced

Materials: One copy of the [Classroom Handout](#) for every two students.

Preparation: 5 minutes (Print, read, copy, teach)

Directions: Explain to the students that they're going to do an activity involving discussion. Put them in pairs. Pass out the [Classroom Handout](#). Tell them to choose five topics that they want to discuss. After they have chosen their topics, they should discuss the questions and write one of their own. You should circulate, helping them with vocabulary, writing down errors to go over later, clarifying the questions, and encouraging conversation.

After they have discussed the questions, working with the same partner, they should respond to at least one question for each topic. They should also write down their three best questions for others in the class to answer. As they're writing their questions and answers, you should be circulating and guiding students to self-correct spelling and grammar mistakes.

For Homework: Have each student respond to at least one of their classmates' questions

(source: ESL Party Land www.eslpartyland.com)