

SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUP LEADERS:

Synopsis of Volunteers' Meeting

November 21, 2017

Attendees:

Linda-L Ruth-L Laureen-L Cliff-L Joyce-L Elizabeth-L Jon-L
Charlotte Regis Jim Taylor Sister Sage Sister Dixon

Ideas, Suggestions and Plans:

1. **Call on students in order:** To avoid having one student monopolizing the conversation, it's best to call on each in order; this also allows the other students to gauge how soon they will have to speak.
2. **The 80/20 rule:** To avoid volunteers talking too much, we will make a sign, similar to the ones we use for our names. It will have **80/20** on it, to remind us that the students should be speaking 80% of the time and we should be speaking only a total of 20%. In a two hour class, this amounts to about 20-25 minutes of total volunteer talk.
3. **Idea Box:** We will place a card-file on the table during every conversation group so anyone, volunteers or students, can write a **topic or idea for a class** on a card and put it in the box. Other volunteers can pull one out if they run out of conversation on the day's topic.
4. **Head Count & Notes:** One of the non-leaders at the group should **take attendance** and be responsible for sending an **email** to Jon with attendance of volunteers and students and some **notes about the class**.
5. **What's up?** At the beginning, we could ask if anyone had any language **problems or confusing situations** they want to talk about. (Maybe taking a car to the garage, speaking with a neighbor, landlord, teacher, etc.)
6. **Break it up!** Set a clock for the break and try to keep it to about **ten minutes**. They do like to talk to each other and usually do so in English, which is good.
7. **Social Hour:** To accommodate the need for social interactions in English, we will designate **one class a month when we will have a "social hour" for the entire second half of the class**. This is in lieu of having an entire two hour

session of socializing as we had considered. Saundy will indicate the social day on the calendar once we decide on the date.

8. **It's in the News!** The **Easy English News will become our main resource** as a discussion topic and teaching tool. Joyce explained how the News could be used as a discussion topic, vocabulary builder and comprehension evaluator. There are many quizzes and exercises for each issue. We will supply all of these.
9. **Check the date:** Joyce and Elizabeth will begin to designate **topics/stories** from the Easy English News for each discussion date on the next calendar. (December). Volunteers can look at the calendar and see which news article has been designated for any given day. This topic selection is not carved in stone, however, and volunteers may choose their own topic or follow any lead that develops in class. The designated Easy English News topics are a suggestion for those volunteers who wish to use them.
10. **Twice as nice:** The same (News) discussion topic will be used in **both groups** on days when two groups are formed. Comprehension questions may have to be simplified to "yes/no" for beginners.
11. **It's on the web:** Jon will **download all the Teacher's materials** from the Easy English website and will post them on the CF site. He will probably also send them to all volunteers via email.
12. **Oh My!** Some students may **not be comfortable** discussing **controversial or complex topics**. When we send out the topic and discussion questions for such a topic, we can mention that if they are not comfortable with the topic, please come to class anyway and you will not have to speak. The topic will be for only part of the time. This is not a perfect solution but we don't want to tell them to not come to class. The leader could, if they want to, select, and send out, two topics and allow students to choose which group they will be with that day. It's a bit more work but might be a better way to include all students. Other ideas are welcome.
13. **Tools for Teaching:** There are several ways volunteers can "teach" in the second half of the class without having a lesson plan. The methods are listed here and are outlined more completely in the handout for the meeting.

- a. Using lessons from our book, or the story method, to teach phonics.
- b. Describing a photograph in five sentences
- c. Playing a form of Taboo with words of varying difficulty
 - i. Jim mentioned the online game, Heads Up, which has lists of words you might like.
 - ii. You can also use simple words, usually nouns, from the News or nouns that relate to the topic of the day.
- d. Describe unseen objects by touch.
- e. Scrambled sentence worksheets can work in a small group.
- f. Concert reading. Read aloud along with the students.
- g. "Story Club," Like a book club but using a much-shorter text.
- h. Use of a Smartphone to listen to audio for understanding of spoken English or slow songs with discernable lyrics.
- i. Simulation (role play) of various situations in which students may find themselves.
 - i. Asking where something is located in a store
 - ii. Taking the car to the garage
 - iii. Buying food at the deli
 - iv. Going to an Emergency Room
 - v. Ordering flowers to be delivered to someone
 - vi. Meeting with a teacher
 - vii. Calling to make a medical appointment, etc.
- j. an ESL game from one of the Internet sites.
- k. Idioms related to the discussion topic of the day or any idioms you find. See the Conversation Friends website for idioms listed by category.
- l. English words that sound alike but have different meanings.(lists are on our website)
- m. Specialized names for groups of animals and birds (also on the website.)
- n. Any interesting English language issues you can think of, from different ways people greet others (Yo, Hey, What's up, What's new, etc.) to terms used to describe food or clothing that may be new to them (food: spicy,

savory, bitter, sour, tart, etc.) (clothing: tasteful, traditional, form-fitting, glamorous, etc.) See links on the CF website for more descriptive terms.

14. Pick a card! Once you are comfortable with a number of the practices mentioned above or others, you can write each on a card or paper and have students draw one or two out of a bowl to determine what will be done in the teaching portion of class that day.

Remember, repetition is not a bad thing. To teach a new concept, it's said to take seven times and seven different ways.