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This lesson plan is intended to equip beginners with some sentence structures to engage in small talk. The exercises included not only practice how to make answers but also how to elicit questions to keep a conversation going.

Vocabulary:

Cut up the pictures at the end of the lesson plan and prepare word cards for nouns:

park
school
playground
post office
hospital
fire station
police station
bakery
supermarket (Woolworths, Coles, IGA)
bus stop
train station
cinema

Exercise: Discuss each of these words and the function of each place.

Explain the following concepts

neighbour
neighbourhood
near
far from

Warm Up Questions

- 1) How long have you lived here?
- 2) Do you know any of your neighbours? How long have you known them?
- 3) Are your neighbours friendly? Do they speak English?
- 4) Do you live near a park/ a playground/ a shopping centre...?
- 5) Do you live far from the beach/hospital/airport/fire station/police station...?
- 6) How far do you live from school/post office/a bus stop/a train station?
- 7) How often do you do shopping/go to the park/take your children to the playground?

I. Yes/No Questions

Yes/no questions are great for English conversation at the beginner level because the answer from the other person will be easy, ie Yes or No. However, we sometimes use a short answer, not only "Yes" or "No".

e.g. *Are you from Korea? Yes, I am. / No, I am not.*

Do you live far from a park? Yes, I do / No, I don't.

Ask the student to compare each pair of sentences. Then explain how yes/no questions are formed.

- 1) You are from Korea.
Are you from Korea?
- 2) Your daughter is two years old.
Is your daughter two years old?
- 3) You live near Central Station.
Do you live near Central Station?
- 4) Your husband **works** five days a week.
Does your husband **work** five days a week?

Yes/no questions can be made up starting with:

Yes/No questions	Positive Answers	Negative Answers
Are you/we/they...?	Yes, I am We/they are	No, I am not / I'm not. we/they aren't.
Is he/she/it...?	Yes, he/she/it is.	No, he/she/it isn't.
Do you/we/they...?	Yes, I/we/they do.	No, I/we/they don't.
Does he/she/it...?	Yes, he/she/it does.	No, he/she/it doesn't

(Note: Students need to learn the verb forms to make correct sentences with do/does questions. However it is better to be taught later when your student is more confident in spoken English)

Exercise 1: Make a word card for each word in the example questions above. Ask your student to put the word cards in order to form questions.

Exercise 2: Answer the following questions (make up your own questions that are relevant to your student).

- 1) Are you from ...?
- 2) Do you have small children?
- 3) Do your children speak English well?
- 4) Does your husband speak English?
- 5) Do you take your son/daughter to a play group?
- 6) Do you watch TV news?

Exercise 3: Encourage your student to ask you similar questions.

Exercise 4: Turn the following questions into *yes/no* questions.

Ask your student to ask you as many yes/no questions as possible to get answers to the questions. It is also good vocabulary practice.

- 1) What kind of food do you like?
- 2) What drink would you like?
- 3) Tell me about your family?
- 4) What do you do?

(Note: You do not need to give your personal information as it is a role play)

II. How far is/are ...from...

How far is/are ...from... is used to ask questions about distance.

e.g. **How far is** your home **from** central station?

The answers can be

It's two blocks/one hundred metres **away**.
three minutes' walk/drive.

Exercise: Draw a map of the student's neighbourhood (or download one from the council website or copy the page from a street directory). Then ask the student how far their home is from the local services. Encourage the student to use the structure to get information from you if he/she is not sure or does not know. After that, give your student a turn to ask questions.

III. How often ...

How often ... is used to elicit questions about their habits. Such questions can be answered in many ways.

- 1) every day (week, month, six months, year, decade, etc.)
every second day
once/twice/three times a day (a week/a month/a year, etc.)

- 2) In descending order of frequency
always
usually/often
frequently
sometimes
occasionally/now and then
rarely
seldom
never

- 3) About or around is used if you don't want to be exact, or can't give an exact number.

e.g. How often do you go shopping?
--- Around twice a week.

Exercise 1: Ask your student to read and answer the following questions. They can then make up 5 new questions for you to answer.

- 1) How often do you speak English?
- 2) How often do you go shopping?
- 3) How often do you watch TV?
- 4) How often do you go to the cinema?
- 5) How often do you do exercise?
- 6) How often do you take your children to the playground?

Exercise 2: Ask your student to make complete sentence answers to the following questions using the adverb in parentheses. This exercise can help give them further expressive capabilities in conversation.

- 1) How often do you eat cereal for breakfast? (rarely)

Answer: I rarely eat cereal for breakfast.

- 2) How often do you eat a sandwich for lunch? (sometimes)

Answer:

- 3) How often do you cook? (always)

Answer:

- 4) How often do you exercise in the morning? (usually)

Answer:

- 5) How often do you smoke? (never)

Answer:

- 6) How often do you talk to your children's school teacher? (every six months)

Answer:

IV. Sample Dialogue & Small Talk Practice

Dialogue

- A.** Hi. How are you today?
B. Good. Thanks. What about you?
A. Not too bad. Are you from Korea?
B. No, I am not. I am from Japan. Are you from Korea?
A. Yes, I am.
B. Do you live around here?
A. Yes, I do. I live near Botany Park.

- B. I know the park. It's 15 minutes' walk from my home. I take my children to the playground there.
- A. Really? How often do you go to the park?
- B. Usually once a week, on Saturdays.
- A. I take my children to the playground often too. I might see you there!
- B. Yes, hopefully. See you again soon.

Exercise 1: Answer comprehension questions.

Ask your student to listen to the dialogue carefully for the first time; Then give the student comprehension questions. Allow time for the student to read the questions before listening to the dialogue again.

- 1) Do the two people know each other?
- 2) Do they live in the same neighbourhood?
- 3) Do they have children?
- 4) Do you think they will meet again? Why?

Exercise 2: Put missing sentences back in the dialogue.

Take the underlined sentences out of the dialogue. You can:

- make cards for these sentences and ask the student to put them back in place *or*
- put these sentences below the dialogue and ask the student to fill in the missing space.

Exercise 3: Ask the student to read the dialogue. Work on the sounds that the student has difficulty pronouncing.

Extension Exercises: More role plays supposing that

- 1) you meet for the first time at a party/a workshop/a playgroup.
- 2) you are at the playground watching children play



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