Language Lessons

for use with the

exploring culture[[1]](#footnote-1)\* exercises

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Get the Most Out Of Your Explorations

Language and Culture are so closely intertwined that you can’t really learn one in isolation from the other. It you don’t understand the frame of reference of the new culture, you will try to fit your experience into your own cultural framework, where it won’t completely fit. This may confuse you.

Also, people use language to express their culture, and the sooner you can learn the language and can discuss cultural themes with people in their own language, the better you will understand the way they think.

These lessons give suggestions for how to learn language as you do your cultural explorations. Beginning and Intermediate learners probably need one or more Language Helpers (LH) – members of the community who set aside time to work more intensively with the learners to help them learn about the language and culture. Later on you will interview lots of people and learn from them, but you may still want to have some time every week with a LH to do more structured language learning.

In this guide there are suggestions for language learning lessons associated with each cultural exploration topic. There are two levels of lessons: one for Beginning Learners and one for Intermediate Learners. There are also some suggestions for how to continue as more Advanced Learners.

In general:

1. Go out and do ***Participant Observation***, and take pictures, if possible, of things you want to learn to talk about. You will be observing the culture, but also getting ideas for language learning.
2. Go home and work with a Language Helper (LH) to learn the names of new objects and activities. Beginners will be learning to recognize and say words referring to objects and actions, as well as learning some basic ***Useful Phrases***. Intermediate learners will be learning more words, but also engaging in more dialogues and working on understanding descriptions and people talking about activities of daily life. Advanced learners will be doing extensive interviews and listening to people talking in more detail about their lives.
3. At the end of each session with your LH, or at the end of each section of the session, you should record a summary of what you have learned, using a digital audio recorder. If possible get one with a USB connection, so you can transfer the recording to a computer or other device. Listen to your recordings, once you make them!

See the introduction for *Beginning Language Learners* and *Intermediate Language Learners* for more details about these levels and the kinds of activities appropriate for these stages.

Beginning Language Learners

**What to aim for:**

You have to start somewhere, and the thing beginning language learners need the most of, is vocabulary. As you do your cultural observations make note of the things and activities you see that you want to learn to understand and talk about. Beginners need to start with concrete vocabulary – things you can see and perhaps handle. So take pictures of the people and objects and actions you see around you, and use these in your language lessons.

**Caution:** You need to find out if it is appropriate to take photos. People in some cultures don’t like having their pictures taken, and sometimes it is illegal to take photos of government buildings. Ask someone with experience whether or not it is appropriate to take photos. If it is, then use a digital camera and either print out pictures or use them on your computer.

**Language Skills**

Beginning learners can work on all 5 of the basic language skills, but the emphasis should be first and mostly on listening, then speaking, reading and writing. Many people want to speak first, but it is even more important to learn to understand what you hear. Suppose you learn to ask someone directions. What good does that do if you can’t understand the answer? Start with listening!

**Techniques for Beginners:**

Listening: ***Look and Listen and Do***

Speaking: ***Listen and Do and Speak, Useful phrases***

Conversing: ***Conversational Routines***

Reading: ***Read the signs***

Writing: ***ABCs***

Intermediate Language Learners

Congratulations! You’re past the beginning stage and now are able to start to use language more creatively! Of course, you’ll still stumble and make mistakes, but that’s normal. You might even find that your pronunciation isn’t as good as it was when you were saying memorized phrases, but that’s OK. It will improve again if you keep at it.

**What to Aim for:**

You still need to learn lots of vocabulary, so keep on with the Vocabulary-Building activities, such as ***Listen and Do***, but build more complex activities out of those words. At Intermediate level you can string together sentences, but they may not yet sound like smoothly connected paragraphs. Listen to native speakers talking in paragraph-level chunks and notice how they connect words and ideas. In communication situations, you want to notice some of the variations in the basic scripts. What changes when one of the basic variables in the communication situation changes, such as the age or status or gender of one of the participants, or the time and place? You want to learn how to make appropriate changes to what you say and do when the situation changes a bit.

**Language Skills:**

You should keep working on your listening comprehension, but you will also be working a lot on speaking at this stage, especially conversations. If reading is one of your goals, then you may be able to find some easy books for children. At the higher intermediate stage it is good to read children’s school books (very early grades) to learn both language and culture.

**Techniques for Intermediate Learners:**

Listening: ***Familiar Stories, Shared Experience, Series***

Speaking: ***Illustrated Life Story, Series, Shared Experience, Familiar Stories***

Conversing: ***Role Play, Dialogue Variations***

Reading: ***Picture books, Familiar Stories***

Alphabet — ABC’s

**Level:** Beginner (usually – see note below)

**Skill:** Reading and Writing

**Purpose:** the purpose of the ABC technique is to become familiar with the alphabet of the new language you are learning. The goal is to be able to recognize, name, and write the letters.

**Note:** Some languages have a complex writing system that may take longer to master. Chinese characters, for example, are a lifelong learning challenge. Some alphabets, like the Thai alphabet are often not completely learned during the beginning stage. But many alphabets, even those which don’t use Roman letters, can be learned fairly quickly.

**What to do:**

In general it is best to learn an alphabet in connection with words you have learned to recognize. Then you can learn the equivalent of “A, as in ‘apple’”. Some people prefer to learn the names of letters and how to pronounce them at the very beginning. Bear in mind that in most languages a letter will be pronounced differently in different positions in the word. One thing to be careful about is not to let the writing system influence the way you pronounce a word. That is called a reading pronunciation and you want to avoid it.

Look And Listen And Do (TPR)

**Level:** Beginner

**Skill:** Listening comprehension

**Purpose:** to learn to recognize vocabulary words when you hear them and do something to show you have understood. The goal is vocabulary building.

**What to Do:**

***Step 1:* Associating meaning with sound**. You point to a picture or an object and the LH says the name of the object or person or action. You listen really well to try to associate the word you are hearing with the object or picture. You do this with 3-5 items. Repeat pointing and listening several times for each item until you feel confident that you can recognize them. For this step YOU decide what word or picture you want to hear, and point at the item so the LH knows which word you want to hear.

***Step 2: Testing your memory.*** Now you put out the 3-5 items you have practiced and ask the LH to say them one at a time, in random order. You point to the picture or item the LH says and point to it or pick it up to show that you have understood. The LH indicates if you are right or wrong. If you are making a lot of mistakes, go back to Step 1 and do it with fewer items, then do Step 2 again. Add new items slowly, at a rate such that you get most of the items right.

***Step 3:*** ***Combining and recombining.*** When you are comfortable that you can recognize the words when you hear them, start to combine the words into longer phrases. For example, if you have learned words for pen, pencil, cup, paper and for red, yellow, and blue, and numbers 1-5, then look for some items of each of the colors, and get the LH to say things like “blue pencil”, “yellow cup”, “red paper”. And then “2 yellow pencils, 3 blue cups”. Then “Give me the yellow cup. “ Eventually work toward understanding longer sentences such as “Give me two red pencils and 3 yellow cups.” Remember to build up slowly so that you succeed most of the time in doing what the LH asks you to do.

***Step 4:*** ***Recording***. Make a digital recording of what you have done with your LH, so you can practice again by yourself and reinforce what you have learned. Record in two ways: 1.A glossary in which words are said in the same order as a vocabulary list or set of pictures you use for a reference (As in Step 1 above), and 2. a recording of the words said in random order, so you can practice Step 2 above.

**Note:** Research has shown that people can learn to recognize words much more quickly than learning to say them. In fact, different parts of the brain are involved in these two activities. It seems to work best to learn to recognize words first, and show you have recognized them by doing something, like pointing, before you try to say the words. That is why Listen and Do comes before Listen and Do and Speak.

Listen And Do And Speak (Speaking and TPR)

**Level:** Beginner

**Skill:** Speaking

**Purpose:** to learn to say words you have learned to recognize through the ***Look and Listen*** and Do technique. The main skill in focus is speaking. The goal is vocabulary building, and learning to say words you are already familiar with.

**What to Do:**

**Step 1:** Review a set of words you have already learned to recognize, using the ***Listen and Do*** technique. Make sure you still remember them and can easily make the connection between the object and the spoken words.

**Step 2:** Using the same pictures you have just reviewed, the LH asks you “What is this?” or “What is he/she doing?” while pointing at one of the pictures. You say the word, then the LH says it after you, and you listen to see if you said it correctly. The LH should be the last person you hear saying the word, not you. So if you say it wrong the first time, and want to say it again, then ask the LH to say it again after you.

**Note:** In general it is good to do the Listen and Do activity and to listen to the recording of those words for at least one day before trying to say the words. The first time you listen, concentrate on the meaning. Once you are recognizing the meaning of the words easily, then pay more attention to the sounds.

If there are a lot of difficult sounds in the words, it might be better to listen for several days, before trying to speak. This gives you a better auditory image in your ear of what the word sounds like, and your pronunciation will probably be better when do you speak.

Reading the Signs

**Level:** Beginner

**Skill:** Reading

**Purpose:** to help you to recognize some of the most important and most common signs you meet out in the community. The goal is to recognize important signs immediately when you see them.

**Why needed:** Some signs you will see everywhere and really want to recognize when you see them. For example: **entrance, exit, do not enter, stop, toilet or (WC, Women, Men**). Others might include **Pharmacy, bank, speed limit.** Other signs will you want to recognize may have to do with your personal needs and interests.

Signs may not be a big problem if you find the script easy to read, but if you are still struggling to decipher a non-Roman script, or if you find it difficult to read different fancy fonts used in signs, then this technique may help you.

**What to Do:**

**Step 1:** Talk with your Language Helper (LH) about signs you would like to be able to read. If possible get your LH to go out into the community with you and take pictures of the signs you want to recognize, or take the pictures on your own.

**Step 2:** Back at home, go over the pictures of the signs with your LH. Use the Listen and Do technique to learn to recognize the signs. A slightly more difficult version of this technique would have your LH say things like: “You want to get out of the parking lot” You would point to the Exit sign. Or “You need to wash your hand” You point to the sign for WC

Useful Phrases

**Level:** Beginner

**Skill:** Speaking

**Purpose:** to give Beginners some phrases they can memorize and use to: 1. be polite (Social phrases) 2. meet some immediate and urgent communication needs (Survival Phrases) and 3. learn more language (Tool phrases) The skill in focus is Speaking and the goal is to meet urgent communication needs.

**What to Do:**

**Step 1:** Decide what you want to be able to say. Remember that memorizing phrases takes a lot of time and brainpower when you are really a Beginner in the language, so use this technique only for what is most needed. You can’t memorize everything!

**Step 2:** Describe to your Language Helper (LH) what you want to communicate. It is best to describe a situation rather than asking for a direct translation. For example if you want to be able to thank someone appropriately, don’t ask “How do you say ***thank you***?” Ask “If you wanted to thank someone for doing something nice for you, what would you say?” Likewise, don’t ask “How do you say ***Good Morning***? “ Ask “How would you greet someone in the morning?” That way you are more likely to get a phrase that sounds more natural in the language you are learning. Ask your LH if that would sound natural in his/her language.

***Step 3:*** When you and your LH have come up with a phrase, record it. Some people record the translation along with the phrase, but then you are switching back and forth in your mind between languages, which may slow your learning. If you don’t have the translation on the recording, then you need some visual reference, such as a written translation or a cartoon depicting the situation. The cartoon is preferable, because you aren’t switching languages. The Lexicarry is a good source for ideas on how to depict useful phrases.

Here are some possibilities of things to learn to do. You will have to find out how to do this in your new language.

* Greeting people at different times of the day
* Greeting people of different age, gender, or social status
* Taking leave of people
* Thanking people
* Asking what something is called
* Asking what someone is doing
* Asking someone to repeat what he/she said, or to speak more slowly
* Asking the price of something

Conversational Routines (Beginner)

**Level:** High Beginner and Intermediate

**Skill:** Conversing (Both listening and speaking)

**Purpose:** to respond appropriately to common greetings or social small-talk and to answer commonly-asked questions. This technique builds on the ***Useful Phrases*** technique.

**Note:** A lot of language interaction involves giving a typical response to a question or statement. For example, when someone says, “Hi, how are you today?” in English normally you would just say something like “Fine, thanks, and you?” even if you have a cold or are feeling grumpy. This is a common conversational “routine” because that is what people routinely say.

Likewise if someone says “Thank you” you would probably respond something like “You’re welcome” or “My pleasure” depending on the situation and where you are from. But, to an English speaker it would feel strange not to say anything at all. This isn’t true of all languages. There might not be an expected response when you thank someone, but you need to find out what is expected and respond appropriately.

**What to Do:**

**Step 1:** Decide on the phrase you want to expand. Suppose you have learned how to thank people. Decide to find out how to respond when someone thanks you. Or suppose you have learned how to greet someone in the morning. Decide to find out what to say when people greet you.

**Step 2:** Ask your Language Helper (LH) if what they would typically say if you thanked him or her. Ask if that is fairly typical of what people would say.

**Step 3:** Record the new phrase, so you can mimic it, but also record the LH saying both the Greeting and Response, or the Thanking Phrase and Response, for example.

Here are some possibilities for conversational routines. You will have to find out what is used in the language you are learning.

* + Greeting exchange and response
	+ Leave-taking exchange and response
	+ Thanking someone and response

At Intermediate stage, you would want to find out if there is a follow-up to the greeting. For example: “Did you have a nice weekend?” “Not bad. How about you? You would also want to find out what are appropriate topics for “small-talk” or casual conversation with people you don’t know very well.

Conversational Routines (Intermediate)

**Level:** Intermediate

**Skill:** Conversing (Both listening and speaking)

**Purpose:** to respond appropriately to common greetings or social small-talk and to answer commonly-asked questions. This technique builds on the ***Useful Phrases*** technique.

**Note:** A lot of language interaction involves giving a typical response to a question or statement. For example, when someone says, “Hi, how are you today?” in English normally you would just say something like “Fine, thanks, and you?” even if you have a cold or are feeling grumpy. This is a common conversational “routine” because that is what people routinely say.

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**What to Do:**

**Step 1:** Decide on the phrase you want to expand. Suppose you have learned how to thank people. Decide to find out how to respond when someone thanks you. Or suppose you have learned how to greet someone in the morning. Decide to find out what to say when people greet you.

**Step 2:** Ask your LH if what they would typically say if you thanked him or her. Ask if that is fairly typical of what people would say.

**Step 3:** Record the new phrase, so you can mimic it, but also record the LH saying both the Greeting and Response, or the Thanking Phrase and Response, for example.

Here are some possibilities for conversational routines. You will have to find out what is used in the language you are learning.

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* Leave-taking exchange and response
* Thanking someone and response

At Intermediate stage, you would want to find out if there is a follow-up to the greeting. For example: “Did you have a nice weekend?” “Not bad. How about you? You would also want to find out what are appropriate topics for “small-talk” or casual conversation with people you don’t know very well.

Dialogue Variations

**Level:** Intermediate

**Skill:** Conversing

**Purpose:** to learn how the script for a communication situation changes when one of the variables changes. Goal: to be able to participate appropriately in communication situations when circumstances change.

**What to Do:**

This technique is built on the ***Role Play*** technique. You follow the general steps given for that, except that you change one of the factors, for example, the time of day, the age or status or gender of the other participant, or the formality of the occasion. Notice how the script changes and play your role appropriately.. It might help to ask two LHs to role-play the different situations. Be sure to make recordings and to keep a record of what factors changed in the communication situation for each recording.

Familiar Stories

**Level:** Intermediate

**Skill:** Listening or Reading

**Purpose:** to help you understand what you hear or read, because you are already familiar with the story. The goal is to understand the story and to learn new words and constructions used in the story.

**What to Do:**

***Step 1: Finding a story familiar to you both.*** They key is to find a story you are already familiar with, which the Language Helper (LH) also knows. This may be difficult, but there are several things you can do. If there is a local story told in a language of wider communication, which you can read or understand, you can familiarize yourself with the story. Or alternatively, you can tell a story in a language of wider communication, so your LH can become familiar with it. Bible stories often work well, if both you and the LH are familiar with them.

***Step 2: Telling the story.*** Your LH tells the story while you record it.

***Step 3: Filling in the blanks.*** You play back the story with your LH and ask about any words you don’t know.

***Step 4:*** ***Listening to the story.*** You listen to the recording several times, focusing on different things: the general story, new vocabulary, new constructions, linking words.

**Variation: Reading*.***

If you find a familiar story in print, you can use it for reading practice. You might still ask your LH to either read the book aloud for you, or to paraphrase the story while you make a recording. In that way you can practice both reading and listening comprehension.

Illustrated Life Story

**Level:** High Beginner or Intermediate

**Skill:** Speaking

**Purpose:** to use drawings or pictures to aid community members in understanding your personal history. The goal is to get to know people and to practice speaking, as well as to find out how to tell your story better.

**What to Do:**

***Step 1: Preparing.*** Look through your photos and see if you have any of your family, your home, or special friends. Have a pencil and paper handy as well.

***Step2: Telling your story.*** Tell about your life, including your family and any other interesting facts about yourself, such as your home town, your interests. Use the pictures or make simple stick figure line drawings to help your listeners understand. They may provide some words for you, as you go along.

***Step 3: Retelling the story.*** When you have finished, ask your Language Helper (LH) to tell your story back to you and record what they say. You will be able to tell if you communicated clearly by how closely their story is like yours.

***Step 4: Clear up misunderstandings.*** If your listeners didn’t completely understand your story, try again to get across the confused points. Then record them retelling your story again.

***Step 5: Listen to your story.*** Now listen to the corrected recording and pay attention to how the native speaker expressed it. How was that different from you?

***Step 6: Retell your own story.*** Now try again to tell your story to different people, in light of what you learned from this process.

Picture Books

***Level:*** *Intermediate*

***Skill: Reading***

**Purpose:** to help you read an easy story, with the help of the pictures. The goal is to learn to read more fluently.

***What to do:***

**Step 1:** ***Find an appropriate book.*** What you are looking for is a children’s book with lots of pictures. In fact, you should start with books for very small children, if you can find them, in which there is a picture for every sentence or two.

***Step 2: Build Vocabulary.*** Point to anything in the pictures for which you don’t know the word, and ask your Language Helper (LH) to say the word. You can use the Listen and Do technique to be sure you know the words.

***Step 3: Read the story.*** You can try to read the story on your own, or read it aloud to your LH, asking questions about anything you don’t understand. If you read the story on your own, then ask your LH questions the next time you meet. If the story is a local one, you may also have some cultural questions to discuss. You might want to ask your LH to read the story aloud to you, and make a digital recording to listen to.

***Step 4: Retell the story.*** This is an optional step, but you can try to retell the story afterwards, rather than reading it. This will show how much of the vocabulary you remember and whether you can retell the important events in the story.

Role Play

**Level:** Intermediate

**Skill:** Conversing

**Purpose:** to practice what is typically said and done in a common social situation, such as buying things at a market, visiting someone in their home, ordering a meal at a restaurant. The goal is to become **more prepared to participate in everyday social situations.**

**What to do:**

***Step 1. Observe the situation.*** Decide on the social situation you want to practice. Ideas for this should come out of your ***Participant Observation*** in the community. If possible, go with your LH and watch him or her take part in the situation. What are the different roles? Which one(s) do you need to play?

***Step 2: Discover the Script.*** Discuss the situation with your LH afterwards and try to discover what a typical “script” would be for this situation. Does that fit with what you observed? If possible, work with two LHs and have them simulate the situation for you.

***Step 3: Record the Role Play.*** Ask your LHs to act out the script while you record it. If you only have one LH available, ask him or her to play both parts in the script, and make a recording. Some LHs will have trouble doing this at first. Let them try several times until they are happy with the recording.

***Step 4: Reverse Role play.*** This step is optional, but it helps you to discover natural ways to play your part. Suppose you need to learn how to be the buyer at a market. If you ask your LH to play the buyer, while you play the seller, then you hear what the native speaker says and does as a buyer.

***Step 5: Role Play***. Now you play your own part in the dialogue exchange. You are the buyer and your LH is the seller.

**Note:** the goal isn’t really to memorize a dialogue, but to play a part. That is why this is an intermediate level activity. You should already be familiar with a lot of vocabulary to help you play your part. Of course, you will be learning new vocabulary, as well as a lot of cultural information by doing the role-play.

Series

**Level:** Intermediate

**Skill:** Listening and Speaking

**Purpose:** to learn how to talk about a procedure – something with ordered steps, such as cooking a meal or weaving a basket, which you have observed or helped to do. The goal is first to understand a procedural text, then to tell one.

**Note:** As with the ***Shared Experience*** technique, the idea here is that it is much easier to understand someone talking about a procedure you have observed yourself or participated in. You already know what happened; you need to learn how people describe what happened.

**What to do:**

***Step 1: Observe or take part in a procedure***. Ask your Language Helper (LH) to show you how to do something people in the culture commonly do, such as preparing a meal, weaving a basket, or changing a tire. It should be something with steps that are done in a set order. For example, you don’t put a cake in the oven before you add the eggs! Take pictures of each step in the process.

***Step 2: Make a recording.*** After you’ve finished the procedure, ask your LH to talk about each of the steps. If you’ve taken pictures, have the LH look at the pictures and record what he is doing in each step. Afterwards, ask him to talk about the whole process in connected speech.

***Step 3: Fill in the blanks.*** Listen to the recording with your LH, while looking at the pictures. Ask questions about anything you don’t understand.

***Step 4: Listen again***. Listen to the recording later by yourself, looking at the pictures. Listen several times, noticing different things: intonation, new vocabulary ,the words that introduce each new step, words that show the relative timing of each step: “After that”, “while the soup is boiling…”.

***Step 5: Describe the process.*** Now you can try to describe the process yourself, while looking at the pictures.

Shared Experiences

**Level:** Intermediate

**Skill:** Listening and Speaking

**Purpose:** the Shared Experience technique is intended to make it easier for you to understand someone telling about an event, because you were present and participated in the event. The goal is to understand a simple discourse, recounting an event at which you were present.

**Note:** Intermediate language learners have some developed some language ability, but still need the support of familiar content to help them to understand.

**What to do:**

***Step 1:*** ***Share the experience.*** Go out and do something with your LH or another friend from the community. Have fun!

***Step 2: Record your LH talking about it.*** When you come back, ask the LH to talk about what you did together. Record what he or she says.

***Step 3: Fill in the blanks.*** Now play back the recording with your LH and stop the recording to ask your LH about any words you don’t understand.

***Step 4: Listen again.*** Now listen to the recording again (and again) and notice different things – the new words you’ve learned, the intonation, the connecting words, the overall meaning.

***Step 5: Tell about the experience.*** Now you can try to tell the story yourself, recording yourself as you do so. Then compare your account of the story with the native speaker. Where can you still improve?

1. EXPORE YOUR NEW NEIGHBORHOOD

Beginning Learners:

When you walk around the neighborhood and notice things, take pictures of places, trees, objects, (if that isn’t considered rude or offensive). If possible, take pictures of people doing things, such as walking, talking, carrying things, buying or selling things. Take pictures of common signs, such as Exit, Entrance, No Parking, or the sign at places you know you’ll want to shop it, like the bakery, grocery store, clothing store, etc.

When you go home, work with a Language Helper (LH) to learn the names of these places and things and words to express the actions the people are doing. Use the ***Look and Listen and Do*** technique. Work on verbs of motions, such as coming, going, walking, driving, riding as well as the other actions planned. Start by just listening and pointing to the right pictures. Later on, after you’ve heard these words lots of times and are very familiar with them, you will start to repeat and say these words.

**Possible Vocabulary**[[2]](#footnote-2)associated with this lesson:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Man | Woman | Boy  | Girl |
| Walking | Running  | Coming | Buying |
| Selling | Carrying | Sign | Tree |
| Flower | House | Shop | Fence |
| Mountain | Field |  |  |

or whatever you see in your neighborhood

**Sample activities:** Here are some ideas for things to do with the LH

1. **Activity 1:** LH just names the people and things and you point to them
2. **Activity 2:** LH puts the word in a sentence, such as “Where is the man?” or “Point to the fence” and you point.

Intermediate Learners:

Visit places in your neighborhood and try to learn the “script” for what is going on there. What do people typically say and do? What are the common events that take place in each place? How and when do neighbors greet each other? What do neighbors talk about? Try to learn to participate in these conversations. Also, there is always more vocabulary to learn! Take pictures of anything you don’t know the name for in your neighborhood.

When you get home, you can use the ***Listen and Do and Speak*** technique to learn the names for the new vocabulary items.

You can do some ***Role Plays*** and ***Conversational Routines*** at home with your Language Helper (LH) to practice small-talk with your neighbors. You can also practice the script for common shopping transactions, such as buying food in a market or shop, buying stamps or clothes or other things sold in your neighborhood.

1. Describe Your Town/city

The language learning goal here is to learn the names of some landmarks in your town or city and to explore public transportation.

Beginning Learners:

**Out and About:** Visit the town square or a major intersection in your town or city. Take pictures of places and public transportation vehicles you see, (or try to find some pictures later on the internet)

**Later at Home:** Review vocabulary from LL1

Use ***Look and Listen and Do*** to become familiar with the vocabulary and pictures from your expedition. Learn the names of buildings and places such as parks, hotels, government buildings, such as town halls. Learn the names for people who drive taxis or buses, or other public transportation. Learn verbs for using public transportation, such as driving, riding, getting on (a bus) getting off (a bus) or whatever you say to get into and out of a taxi or other means of transportation. Learn verbs for coming and going.

Use the map you are drawing in your lessons. You can use the ***Look and Listen and Do*** technique to practice following directions for how to get to the post office, or bank, or school.

**Possible vocabulary** associated with this topic:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Bank | School | Post office | Park |
| Restaurant | Hotel | Bus | Bicycle |
| Car | Taxi | Train | Motorcycle\Bicycle |
| Airport | Train station | Bus station | Drive |
| Ride | Bus driver | Taxi driver | Conductor |
| Turn left | Turn right | Go straight |  |

Intermediate Learners:

Review vocabulary related to the neighborhood and verbs of motion. Learn any new words you can think of that you are missing.

If possible, walk around the town with your Language Helper (LH), so you can use the ***Shared Experience*** technique when you get home. Learn the scripts for buying a train ticket, a bus ticket, buying stamps, doing a simple transaction at the bank, talking to people in the park. Practice these with ***Role Play*** techniques with your LH.

1. Neighborhood

Beginning Learners:

**Out and About:** During the first lesson you took pictures of some of the major people and things in your neighborhood. This time, look more closely and take pictures of some of the things you didn’t see before. If necessary, go a little further from home to see new things.

**Back home:** Use ***Look and Listen and Do*** to learn new vocabulary. Combine the new words with some descriptive words (colors, size) and with expressions like “there is, or there are” to describe what is in the pictures.

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Apartment | Garage | Garden shed | Barn |
| Outhouse | Kitchen house | Porch | Community well |
| Common/green/park | Neighbor | Live | See |
| Have | Big | Small | “there is” |
| Fence/wall (between properties) | Colors – white, dark, black, blue, red, yellow |

Intermediate Learners:

Get your Language Helper (LH) to describe the neighborhood: what it looks like and what certain buildings or spaces are used for. You are aiming for a simple description you can understand. You may have to start with a walk around the neighborhood, with your LH describing in sentences what he or she sees. If you can get a recording of that while walking around town, great. Otherwise, take pictures and ask the LH to describe the pictures when you are at home. Take note of any new words you hear in the description.

1. Where People Live

While you are walking around, look at the outside of places where people live, as well as the public areas inside apartment buildings. What can you see?

Beginning Learners:

Do you know the names for all the parts of a house or an apartment building? Use the ***Look and Listen and Do*** technique to learn the names for different sorts of residences and things you can see from the outside or from public areas.

**Possible vocabulary**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Apartment building | Entrance | Mailbox | Door |
| Window | Roof | Elevator | Floor |
| Doorman | Balcony | Stairs | Story (as in two-story building) |
| Curtain | Window shade | Courtyard | Clothesline |
| Laundry room | Yard or garden | Carport or garage | Driveway |

Intermediate Learners

Ask a local friend to tell you about where most people live – do they live in apartment buildings or houses? Record your friend talking about this and ask about any words you don’t understand. Listen to your recordings and then go and ask another person about the same topic. You could say something like “This is what someone told me about this topic. Do you agree?” Sometimes you will get a very different point of view. Record that person as well.

You could also ask a LH to write a short paragraph on the same topic, and use this for reading practice.

You can also ask about how well people know their neighbors and perhaps practice a simple dialogue exchange you might hear between neighbors. Use ***Role Play*** techniques to practice the dialogue.

1. inside the House

Language learning can begin at home!

Beginning Learners:

Today you can learn some of the parts of a house or apartment. You can start with your own house, or with those of a friend. Take pictures of rooms in the house and some basic furnishings.

Use ***Look and Listen and Do*** to learn the names of rooms in a house and the furnishings in them. You can also learn some basic verbs describing what people do in each room.

**Possible Vocabulary** associated with this lesson:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Living Room | Dining Room | Kitchen | Hall |
| Bedroom | Bathroom | WC (if separate from bathroom) |
| Other rooms in the house  | Table | Chair |
| Sofa | Sink | Stove | Refrigerator |
| Toilet | Bed | Desk | Telephone |
| TV | Wash dishes | Bathe | Eat |
| Cook food | Watch TV | Sleep |  |

Intermediate Learners:

Ask your Language Helper (LH) to describe everything he or she sees in one room. It should be a connected description, such as, “In the living room there is a sofa along one wall, with a picture hanging over it. In front of the windows there is a table and a large chair. There is another chair on the other side of the room. In one corner there is a television. There are white curtains at the window.”

Record and listen to the descriptions of each room. Then try to describe the room yourself.

1. Where are Things Kept?

“A place for everything….” But what are those places called?

Beginning Learners:

As you explore where things are kept, learn the words for the things and the places and location words, such as “in” or “on” as well as some verbs for putting things in storage and taking them out.

**Possible vocabulary:**

Places where things are kept, such as:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cupboard | Closet | Storeroom | Cabinet |
| Pantry | Basket | Box |  |

or whatever the places are called.

Things stored in each place, such as:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Clothing | Dishes and kitchen utensils |
| Different kinds of food | Blankets |

Location words, such as:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| In | Into |
| On top of | Under |

Verbs:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Put away | Put X in Y |
| Take out of… |  |

The actual vocabulary will vary with the culture and language. Take pictures of things in each storage compartment, and also the compartment. Use the ***Look and Listen and Do*** technique to learn the names of everything. Put things in boxes, take them out again and so forth.

Sample Activities:

**Activity 1:** The Language Helper (LH) says the name of each item and you point to it.

**Activity 2**: The LH says “The dishes are in the cupboard” You point to the picture of dishes in the cupboard.

**Activity 3:** The LH says “Where are the dishes?” You either point to the cupboard or say “in the cupboard.”

Intermediate Learners:

You take a picture of a container with various things in it, and ask the Language Helper (LH) to describe the picture in a short paragraph. It might sound something like this: “This is a picture of a cupboard. Inside the cupboard there are dishes and glasses and cups and saucers.” Or “This is a picture of a shed. Inside the shed are bags of seed and gardening tools. There is also a bicycle.” You record the LH describing the picture. Ask about any words you don’t know. Afterwards you can listen to the recording and then try to describe some of the pictures yourself.

1. Family

It’s all in the family! But who is considered family? Families can be large or small, and languages differ in the number of terms they use to describe family members. For some families you need to learn terms for relationships like co-wife.

Beginning Learners:

Start by drawing a picture of a small nuclear family of a husband and wife with perhaps 3 or 4 children. Include at least one boy and one girl among the children. Start by assigning each person a name, so you know who you are referring to. Now ask what relation each person is to the others. See if there are different words for older or younger brother or sister. Then move on to grandparents. See if there are different names for mother’s mother and father’s mother, for example. Use ***Look and Listen and Do*** to learn the words for the different family relations.

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Husband | Wife | Married |
| Children | Mother | Father |
| Sister (older? younger?) | Brother (older? younger?) | Grandmother (mother’s mother) |
| Grandmother (father’s mother) | Grandfather (mother’s father) | Grandfather (father’s father) |

It is a real help to draw a family tree for this lesson, or to have a family of dolls to illustrate the different people in the family.

**Sample Activities:**

**Activity 1*:*** Using a family of dolls or a family tree, ask your Language Helper (LH) to give each person a name. Then the LH says “This is Margarita. She is married to Pablo. Margarita is Pablo’s wife. Pablo is Margarita’s husband.” Now the LH says “Who is the wife?” You point or you say “Margarita.” LH asks, “Who is the husband? “ You point or say “Pablo” You can do similar activities to learn the names for son, daughter, brother, sister, etc.

**Activity 2:** Learn the grandparents names and then the LH asks “Who is Pablo’s father?” You say Roberto. “Who is Pablo’s son?” You say, “Francisco.” Now the LH asks “Who is Francisco’s grandfather?” You say “Roberto.” Note that this is mostly a comprehension activity, because you only have to say the names, but you have to understand the relational words.

Intermediate Learners:

Expand the family relationship names by moving into relationships like cousin, nephew, niece, mother-in law, father-in- law, sister-in law, aunt, uncle, etc. Again the best way to do this is to use a family of dolls or draw a family tree with names for all the people so you can be sure you understand the terms. Don’t be surprised if some of the terms show up in unexpected places.

After you learn some of the terms, ask the Language Helper (LH) to tell you about his or her family – perhaps drawing a family tree to illustrate it. Record and Listen. You can also draw your own family tree and tell your LH about it. You could also use a family album and show pictures of real people!

1. Daily Routines

Each person has his or her own daily routine, but often the person routine fits within a norm for the culture. In some cultures, for example, people go to work at 7 a.m. and have a 2-hour break for lunch. Other cultures have a quick lunch break and flexi-time. Learn how to talk about people’s daily routines.

Beginning Learners

When you are observing daily routines, learn the words for a lot of common daily activities. This is a great lesson to learn more verbs for things people do every day. You can take pictures or use drawings to help you learn.

**Possible vocabulary**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Get up | Brush teeth | Bathe or shower | Get dressed |
| Eat breakfast | Go to work | Go to school | Eat lunch |
| Go home | Wash your hands | Make dinner | Set the table |
| Eat dinner | Wash dishes | Put out the trash | Undress |
| Go to bed | or whatever you observe in the daily routine |

**Possible Activities:**

**Activity 1:** Take pictures or find pictures online of people doing these daily activities. Use ***Look and Listen and Do***to learn the names of the actions.

**Activity 2:** When you feel ready, you can try to say the names of the activities. The Language Helper (LH) points to a picture and asks “What is he/she doing?” and you say: “Eating dinner.”

Intermediate Learners:

Learn more about some daily routines at home. Ask your Language Helper (LH) to describe what he or she does at home in the morning. For example: “I get up around 6 a.m. I go to the bathroom to brush my teeth, then I get dressed and make breakfast. After I eat breakfast, I wash the dishes, then I gather things I need for work and leave for work.” You can ask for a similar description of what your LH typically does in the evenings at home. Record and listen, then tell about your own daily routine.

Likewise you can build a ***Series*** on any of the household chores, such as washing dishes, cooking a meal, doing laundry, making a bed, cleaning, yardwork. Choose one to start, but this could keep you busy for a long time!

1. Clothing

Clothing really is a cultural artifact. Even though people in a lot of countries now wear Western style clothing in business settings, there may be very different standards to what people wear for different occasions.

Beginning Learners:

Start by learning the words for outer clothing for men and women and children. Take pictures, or use real clothing objects to do ***Look and Listen and Do***. It might help to have a couple of dolls or action figures you could dress and undress.

**Note:** Don’t ask about underwear until you really know someone well and then only ask someone of your same gender about that. It could be really offensive and embarrassing to your LH.

**Possible Vocabulary** for this unit:

Women’s clothing:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Blouse | Skirt | Dress |
| Pants (trousers) | Shoes (sandals?) | Scarf |
| Coat | Sweater | Bathrobe |

Men’s clothing:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Shirt | Pants | Hat | Shoes |
| Socks | Jacket | T-shirt | Jeans |

Children’s clothing: Diapers (nappy) Shawl

…or whatever clothing you see people wearing every day. These might include items like sarongs, shalwar kameez, tunic, robe, etc.

Also learn verbs associated with clothing, such as:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Wear or wearing | Put on | Take off |
| Get dressed (yourself) | Dress a baby or someone else | Change clothes |

**Suggested Activities:**

Take pictures or find pictures on the internet and use the ***Look and Listen and Do*** technique to learn the names of different clothes. You can also have the Language Helper (LH) say sentences like “One woman is wearing a red skirt and the other woman is wearing a blue skirt.” You have to point to the correct picture.

Intermediate Learners:

Learn the words associated with clothing that you haven’t already learned, such as sleeve, leg (of a pair of pants), button, zipper, pocket, and other, less- commonly used clothing, such as raincoat, formal attire. If you feel comfortable doing it at this stage, you could ask about underwear, or go shopping with someone of the same gender and ask the names of items you see for sale.

Get someone to describe pictures of two people and ask what you think they are going to do, based on their clothing. Record, and ask questions about any words you don’t know. You might take pictures of people at a wedding or funeral and ask about their attire.

1. Personal Care and Adornment

Everyone likes to look good, but what makes a person look more attractive? Is it a tattoo? Is it red dye in the hair? Is it true blonds have more fun? Find out how to talk about personal care and jewelry and other adornment.

Beginning Learners:

Learn words for different ways to describe skin color and hair and products to make them look good: Of course, depending on where you are, the variety of hair and skin colors are different.

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Light-skinned | Dark-skinned | Blond | Brunette | Red-hair (if any) |
| Straight hair | Curly hair | Long hair | Short hair | Shampoo |
| Toothbrush  | Comb | Hairbrush | Face cream | Body cream  |
| Deodorant | Perfume | Short hair | Long hair | Bracelet |
| Earrings | Necklace | Ring | Lipstick | Rouge |

**Possible Activities:**

The learning activities are similar to those in recent lessons: Use pictures of people, with different hair and skin colors and different kinds of adornment. The LH can describe a picture, such as “A woman is wearing a necklace and earrings.” And you have to point at the right picture. You can also learn the names for different beauty projects with ***Look and Listen and Do*** techniques.

Intermediate Learners:

Ask a Language Helper (LH) to give longer descriptions of pictures of different people. Ask them to choose a picture of a girl or woman they consider attractive and describe her and then tell why she seems attractive.

Do the same thing with pictures of men—ask a woman to pick out a picture of the man she thinks is most attractive and then describe the picture and then tell you why she considers him attractive.

1. Health

How do you tell the doctor where it hurts? You need to learn some vocabulary related to your body and keeping it healthy.

Beginning Learners:

Start with parts of the body and then some common diseases or ailments people suffer. Use ***Look and Listen and Do*** to learn the names of different parts of the body. Learn the names for some common sicknesses, such as fever, chills, nausea, etc. with different pictures. Learn some useful phases such as “my head hurts”

**Possible Vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Head | Headache | Hurt | Stomach | Stomach ache |
| Back | Backache | Arm | Leg | Hand |
| Foot | Finger | Toe | Fever | Cold |
| Broken | Neck | Eye | Blind | Ear |
| Deaf | Lame | Hear | See | Walk |
| Malaria | Doctor (or whoever you go to for illness) | Nurse (or whoever assists the doctor) |

**Suggested Activities:**

**Activity 1:** Use ***Listen and Do*** to learn names of different parts of the body. Your LH can point to his eyes, ears, nose and mouth and say the word for each part, then say one of the words and you point to your own nose etc. You can build up to more complicated sentences, such as “point to your left foot with your right hand” and so forth.

**Activity 2:** Next learn some illnesses or injuries that commonly happen to that part of the body. For example: His head hurts. He has a headache. His back hurts. He has a backache. Note: not all languages will have a word for headache or backache. They might just say “His head hurts.” You could act out the ailment and get the LH to name it.

Intermediate Learners:

Ask the LH to talk about the common illnesses or diseases people have and what they do to remedy them. Record and ask about any words you don’t know. Role Play a visit to the doctor. Make a game where you have to draw a card that says “Doctor, I have a headache.” You have to say “Take two aspirin and call me in the morning” or whatever the doctor would say.

1. Transportation

How do people get from here to there? You need to start by learning the names for the different kinds of public and private transportation, and then move on to the scripts for how to arrange transportation and get what you need to keep your private vehicles moving.

Beginning Learners:

Start by using ***Look and Listen and Do*** to learn the words for different types of public and private transportation: and related vocabulary:

 **Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Bus | Taxi | Shared-ride taxi or mini-van | Motorized rickshaw (tuk-tuk) |
| Car |  Motorcycle | Bicycle | Airplane |
| Train | Ticket | Conductor | Pilot |
| Flight attendant | Driver | Fare | Luggage |
| Gate | Airport | Train station | Bus station |
| Bus stop | Route | Tip | Receipt |
| Fly | Drive | Gas | Gas station |

**Suggested Learning activities:**

**Activity 1 and2***:* UseLook and Listen and Doto learn the names of places and vehicles, then combine them with people and places. For example, the LH could say, “Andres and his grandson are going to the park in a bus” You point to pictures of Andres, his grandson, the bus and the park.

**Activity 3**: ***Useful phrases***. Learn how to ask a taxi-driver to take you to different places. Sometimes you have to negotiate a price ahead of time. Learn to ask: “How much to take 2 people to the Wararot market?” or to wherever you want to go.

Intermediate Learners:

Learn or review the basic ***Dialogue*** expected in relation to arranging for different kinds of transportation: with a taxi driver or bus driver; when getting gasoline at a gas station, when buying a plane ticket or boarding a plane. Then use the ***Dialogue Variations*** technique to practice differing scripts.

1. Transporting things

People have things they need to move from here to there. Sometimes they carry them in their hands or on their heads or backs. Sometimes they need animals or vehicles to help. Learn to talk about transporting things.

Beginning Learners:

Learn different words for ways to carry things. Languages differ in the number of different words they use for the way you carry things.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Carry in your hand | Carry on your back | Basket |
| Carry between two people | Bag | Plastic bag |
| Carry on your head or with a tumpline |  |  |

Learn words for other ways to transport things:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mail | Parcel post | Ship |
| Crate | Container (as in shipping containers) | Freight |
| Shipment |  |  |

**Suggested Learning Activities:**

**Activity 1***:* Use ***Look and Listen and Do*** to follow your LH’s directions about carrying different things in different ways. Use pictures or toy cars and trucks and trains to follow directions about shipping things in different ways.

**Activity 2***:* Get your LH to tell a simple story about someone who transported different things in different ways. You act out the story as he tells it.

Intermediate Learners:

**Activity 1***:* Ask your LH to describe some of the kinds of things you would typically carry in different ways. Record, and discuss anything you don’t understand. Listen to the recordings afterwards.

**Activity 2***:* Learn a typical dialogue for mailing a parcel at the PO, or for arranging for someone to transport something for you.

1. Shopping

Buying and selling things is the way people in most cultures get what they need to live. Learning how to talk about this could turn into several lessons or units. For each thing you buy there are a different set of vocabulary and questions.

Beginning Learners:

You might start by learning how to buy things at the market.

**Possible Vocabulary:**

**Suggested Activities:**

1. At the Market:

**Activity *1*:** Review money and numbers, using ***Look and Listen and Do***. You could use real money or pretend money. Practice writing down large numbers as your LH says them, so you get used to processing numbers quickly.

**Activity 2***:* Review things you buy in the market. Use real items or pictures, and combine them with weights and measures and quantities, such as 1 kilo of rice, 2 bunches of bananas, a dozen (or kilo) of eggs, etc.

**Activity 3:** Learn ***Useful Phrases*** to use at the market, such as “How much does 1K.of X cost?” or “I’ll have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ please.”

1. In a Grocery store or shop

**Activity 4***:* Learn vocabulary for things sold there: Milk, canned goods, juices, coffee, tea, sweets, or whatever.

1. In a Clothing Store:

**Activity 5***:* Learn words for sizes, colors, sale, cotton, silk, names of specific things you want to buy. **See also LL9** on clothing.

Intermediate Learners:

**Activity 1:** Get someone to talk about if and when items are on sale or cheaper. When are some fruits in season, for example. Or are there special occasions when things are more plentiful or when you can buy special items. Record these descriptions and add them to your Listening Library.

**Activity 2:** Role Play buying things in different kinds of shops.

1. What’s to Eat?

Everyone needs to eat! But when and where and what? All these things differ with different cultures. Learn how to talk about meals and how to prepare them.

Beginning Learners:

Learn vocabulary associated with cooking and eating foods at home

**Possible Vocabulary:**

1. Breakfast
2. Breakfast foods
3. Lunch
4. Dinner
5. Snacks
6. Names of various dishes commonly eaten at each meal
7. Names of kitchen appliances: fire, stove, oven, refrigerator, sink, counter, etc.
8. Names of cooking implements: pots, pans, spoon, spatula, ladle
9. Different ways to prepare things: wash, slice, chop, stir
10. Different ways to cook things: boil, bake, fry, steam etc.
11. Verbs: cook, serve

**Suggested Activities:**

**Activity 1:** Use ***Look and Listen and Do*** techniques to learn all these words. Your LH can say things like “Slice the onion.” You act out slicing with a real onion or a picture of one. Your LH could give you instructions one by one on how to make a simple dish.

**Activity 2:** After you’ve done Activity 1 and are quite familiar with the vocabulary, ask your LH to tell how you to make that dish in a simple paragraph. You might not be able to understand it all until you are a bit more advanced, but since you will have learned a lot of the words, it helps you to understand the connectors, such as “and then”, “next” etc.)

Intermediate Learners:

**Activity 1:** This is the stage at which you can really use the ***Series*** technique to learn how to make various common dishes served in people’s homes. Take pictures of each step, as you make the dish with a friend. Then get a LH to describe each picture. Record and listen. Ask the LH to describe the whole process in single recording.

**Activity 2***:* Make a PowerPoint® slideshow from the pictures of the different steps in your Series. Link the associated recordings with each slide. Now watch the whole slideshow and listen.

1. Where to Eat?

Most people enjoy eating out at least occasionally. In fact, in some countries a lot of people don’t even own a stove at home and always eat out! Learn how to talk about food and order it.

Beginning Learners:

What kinds of restaurants are there? What kinds of food are served?

**Possible Vocabulary:**

Learn the names of different sorts of restaurants

Learn the names for various restaurant dishes. Start with the most common ones.

**Suggested Activities:**

**Activity 1:** Order different things when you go out and take a picture when the food comes! Or look on the internet for pictures of typical dishes. Use ***Look and Listen and Do*** to learn to recognize, then say the names of these dishes.

**Activity 2***:* Use ***Useful Phrases*** to learn to order a dish: “I’ll have the spaghetti carbonara please.” “I’d like, or I’ll have….” “Could I have the bill please?”

**Activity 3**: Try to talk about foods you like and dislike: “I like spaghetti carbonara. I don’t like ravioli.” Or whatever you actually like.

Intermediate Learners:

**Activity 1:** Use ***Dialogue Variations*** to learn the Scripts for different restaurants or different times of day and role play them with a LH.

**Activity 2***:* Also ***Role Play*** the script for inviting people to eat at your home or what to do when you are invited to dinner at someone else’s home.

1. How Does your Garden Grow?

People plant gardens to grow food for their families and flowers for the beauty. Learn how to talk about both kinds of gardens and gardening

Beginning Learners:

Use ***Look and Listen and Do*** to learn appropriate vocabulary.

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Garden | Herbs | Vegetables | Flowers |
| Gardening tools | Seeds | Pots | Trowel |
| Shovel | Hoe | Gloves  | Watering pot |
| To plant | To water | To cultivate | To pick |
| To harvest | Rain | Sun | Drought |

**Suggested activities:**

**Activity 1:** Use ***Look and Listen and Do*** to learn basic vocabulary.

**Activity 2:** Act out the different steps in gardening when your LH describes them. Now reverse the process – your LH acts the steps out and you try to say what he or she is doing.

**Activity 3:** Learn to say what flowers and plants you like best.

Intermediate Learners:

**Activity 1***:* Ask your LH to describe what people grow in gardens, what they are used for. Record short descriptions.

**Activity 2:** Practice talking about what you like to grow in your garden and what sorts of plants grow at different times of the year.

1. Off to Work We Go

What sorts of manual labor do people do? Farming, building, cleaning houses? What other kinds of jobs do people have? Learn to talk about work.

Beginning Learners:

What tools do people use? Also learn the name for that job; for example: builder, farmer, teacher, maid.

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hammer | Saw | Machete | Hoe |
| Rake | Knife | Bucket | Nails |
| Shovel | Screwdriver | Screws | Wrench |
| Broom | Mop | Duster | Maid |
| Carpenter | Farmer | Use | Cut |
| Saw | Plant | Harvest |  |

**Suggested Activities:**

**Activity 1:** Use ***Look and Listen and Do*** to learn the names for tools and what people do with them.

**Activity 2:** The LH could point to a hammer and ask: who uses a hammer? You have to say “a carpenter”

Intermediate Learners:

**Activity 1:** Record a couple of short texts, where your LH describes different sorts of manual laborers, what they do and the tools they typically use, how they dress, etc. You can try to talk about some of the workers you know.

**Activity 2:** Look in some children’s school books to see what they have to say about different professions and jobs.

1. Activities in the Neighborhood

As you do your cultural exploration learn to talk about the activities you see. Take pictures, if appropriate.

Beginning Learners:

It is hard to suggest specific vocabulary for this lesson, because the vocabulary will depend on what is going on in your neighborhood – where you live, whether it is in a city or in the country. Remember that beginning learners are mostly learning vocabulary and how to use it in simple sentences. You need nouns, verbs, descriptive words. These are the building blocks for being able to understand people and talk to them about the activities you see.

**Suggested Activities:**

Use ***Look and Listen and Do*** to learn the names for the activities being done, plus the name of the person or worker doing them, if relevant. For example: building a house. A person who builds a house is a builder. Or you can just learn to say what you saw: “A woman was weaving,” “A man was fixing a bicycle” and so forth. First learn to recognize the pictures of the activities, and then add speaking when you are ready.

Intermediate Learners

**Activity 1:** ***Shared Experience***. Ask your LH to walk around the neighborhood with you and to tell you what he or she sees people doing. When you get home, ask him/her to tell you again and record what your LH remembers about the activities you saw. Ask about any words you don’t’ know, then listen to the recordings on your own.

**Activity 2***:* The next day try to recount to your LH what you saw together in the neighborhood. Don’t try to memorize exactly what the LH said, but just use some of the vocabulary you have learned to talk about things in your own way.

1. Community Social Activities

People are social beings. They like to get together and do things. Learn to participate in as many social activities as possible and to talk about them.

Beginning Learners:

Learn the names for different community social events that take place regularly, such as a dance, community picnic, open-air market (if one day a week, it is an event, as well as a place), weddings, funeral, women’s group, fair, art or craft fair, rodeo. Learn the names for things people are doing at these events.

**Suggested Activities:**

**Activity 1:** Use pictures or drawings and the Listen and Do technique to learn more words

**Activity 2:** Learn ***Useful Phrases*** and ***Conversational Exchanges*** to use at the different Social Events.

Intermediate Learners:

**Activity 1**: Ask a LH to describe a community event, and record the account of what you did together. This is a ***Shared Experience***, if you attended it together. That makes it easier for you to understand. If you don’t have an opportunity to attend with your LH, you can still ask him or her to describe what typically happens at such an event. Ask questions about any words you don’t know. Your goal at Intermediate Stage is to be able to understand connected speech – that is not just sentences, but paragraphs – about something that happened or which often happens. You will have lots of questions about why things happen, but you may not be able to understand the answers at this stage – but it is the next stage in your language learning journey.

Advanced Learners:

At this stage you can ask people to answer the questions you have about these events – how they feel about them, what they do for the community or for families. You can do Ethnographic Interviews about these topics. Or just get people to talk about them and ask a few questions about things you are most interested in. At this stage you can ask some of the questions in the cultural guide directly, but most often you need to read between the lines.

1. Holidays

As the year progresses, participate in as many national holidays as you can and religious holidays to the extent you feel comfortable participating. You may be able to observe, even if you don’t participate.

Beginning Learners:

**Possible vocabulary:**

1. Names for holidays
2. Month and day held. This is a good time to review names of months, if you need to.
3. Vocabulary associated with each holiday: For example, in America Thanksgiving Day is associated with turkeys, football, Autumn leaves, family. Soong Kran in Thailand is associated with water. Guy Fawkes Day in England is associated with Bonfires and fireworks. Note special foods, clothing, historical or mythical figures associated with the event. Learn the names for as many of these things as you can.

**Possible Learning Activities:**

LH can say “Americans eat turkey on this day” And you say “Thanksgiving” or, Thai people throw water on this holiday. You say “Soong Kran”.

Intermediate Learners:

Do a ***Shared Experience*** with a LH. For example, visit the Flower Festival Parade in Thailand. Take pictures, if appropriate. Afterwards ask your LH to describe some of the highlights of the parade and record it. Ask about any vocabulary you don’t understand. Listen to the recording. Later, go out and tell your neighbors about what you saw at the Flower Festival parade.

1. Body Language

People communicate as much with the rest of their bodies as they do by the words they utter with their mouths. Often people believe the message conveyed by body language more than the message in your words, so it is important to learn body language and the messages it is conveying.

Beginning Learners:

In some ways, beginners have an advantage in observing body language, because you don’t yet know enough language to say very much and so aren’t distracted by thinking of what to say. When you practicing your ***Useful Phrases***, such as greetings, and leavetaking expressions, or the other phrases you have used, Role Play these exchanges with your LH and note the body language, including: how far away he or she stands. Note if this is different between men and women, two men or two women. Also notice gestures and facial expressions. For example, in some cultures you would never wave at someone with your left hand or take food, or offer food with your left hand – which is considered your dirty hand, no matter how well you have washed it. Also pay attention to eye contact – especially between people of opposite sex.

Tell your LH you want to practice body language in the ***Conversational Exchanges*** you have learned to say.

Intermediate Learners:

When you are practicing ***Dialogue Variations***, pay attention to changes in Body Language that go along with differences in age or status of the participants, or the formality of the occasions. ***Role Play***these with your LH.

1. Electronic Communication

More and more people around the world are using electronic communication: mobile phones, text messages, e-mail etc. There are still some places where this is not true, but they are fewer and farther between. If you are learning a language where people use electronic communication, you need to learn how to talk about it and how language changes when it is used this way.

Beginning Learners:

Talking on the phone is harder than talking face to face, because you only get part of the auditory message and can’t see the speaker’s face. Still, there are some things you can learn from the beginning about answering the phone:

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Telephone | Mobile phone |
| Text message | SIM number |

***Useful phrases:***

* What to say when you answer the phone
* What you say when you are ending a phone call
* I’d like to add X money to my phone.
* Where can I add minutes to my phone?

You might also get a friend to help you figure out how to read some of the top-level words on the phone interface, such as: Messages, Call history, Contacts, etc.

Texting may be difficult because there are abbreviations that may be different from what you are used to. This is something more suitable for Intermediate learners, unless you are texting someone who speaks a language you already know.

Intermediate Learners:

Talking on the phone can be daunting, but maybe your LH will let you practice by calling him or her, until you get more comfortable.

If you use a mobile phone a lot it would probably be worthwhile to learn all the words you don’t know related to your phone’s interface, such as ring tones, settings, etc.

Try texting messages to a friend, maybe your LH

1. Visual and Auditory Media

Most people now have access to visual media such as films, and television programs, and to auditory media, such as radio. Sometimes these are broadcasts and sometimes they are now digitally recorded on DVDs or on computers or other electronic devices. Learn to talk about these media and work at being able to understand them.

Beginning Learners:

**Some possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Computer | Website | Blog |
| Radio | TV | Program |
| Newscast | New presenter | Watch TV |
| Weather forecast | Movie (film) | Movie theater (cinema) |
| Go to the movies | Actor, movie star | Camera |
| Picture | Video | Take a picture |

Here’s a tip for beginners when listening to the radio or television news. First listen to the international news in English or another language you know well. Now you know what’s happening in the world, so when you listen to the news in the language you are now learning, you should be able to pick out some of the main words, such as earthquake, election, or whatever the major stories are about. Local news will be harder and will take longer to understand.

For television, if it is possible, record a section of a program – perhaps not the whole thing. In that way you can listen more than once. If close captioning is available, turn that on so you can see and hear the words. Don’t worry if you can’t understand the whole thing. Listen for some of the main words and guess about the topic.

Intermediate Learners:

Watch a television program with your LH. If possible, record it, or turn on close captioning. Ask questions about things you don’t understand. Sometimes watching a program with subtitles is helpful in understanding the program. Especially if it is on a CD or digital recording, so that you can turn the subtitles on or off.

1. Print Publications.

Newspapers and magazines and books can be useful language learning materials even for beginning learners. You can use them at all levels.

Beginning Learners:

Look for words you already have learned to understand when you hear them. You can buy a newspaper and underline all the words you know. After that, have a guess at what the article is about. Sometimes there is a picture to help you out. In magazines or newspapers, are there advertisements? What are they advertising? Talk this over with your LH.

As for books, look for books at your reading level, even if that is for the smallest children. Even books with one sentence per page and a picture can help you learn to read! Don’t try to read books where you have to look up a lot of words on every page. That isn’t really reading – that’s a different kind of exercise.

Intermediate Learners:

Look for magazines about topics that interest you. You don’t have to be reading great literature at this stage – Sports or fashion magazines are OK, or magazines about pop culture. They will help you learn something about the overall culture of the place you are living in.

A good way to learn both language and culture is to read children’s school books at a level you can handle. Even first grade school books will have a lot of cultural information and civics and moral lessons people want their children to learn. There will also be lessons about the history and heroes of the nation. Reading children’s school books is a good way to learn what all the adults learned when they were growing up.

1. Time

People think of and talk about time in different ways in different cultures. You want to learn what people recognize as major parts of the day, such as morning, noon, afternoon, evening, night. But cultures vary as to when each section of the day starts. Also, in some cultures, the days are divided up quite differently (as in Thailand).

Beginning Learners:

Learn to tell time, using a clock (if applicable) or drawings of positions of the sun.

Learn parts of a day (and night).

Learn the names of days of the week, using a calendar. Note that there may not always be a 7-day week! Some cultures traditionally have 5-day weeks, or other numbers.

**Other possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Today | Tomorrow | Yesterday |
| Last night | Day before yesterday | Day after tomorrow |
| Days of the month | Early | Late |
| Morning | Afternoon | Noon |
| Evening | Night | Midnight |

Intermediate Learners:

Ask LH to tell you about a time when he or she was really late to an event – how late is really late? How offended, if at all, was the other person? Look for expressions that indicate how time is viewed. For example, English speakers talk about time as a commodity: we save time, spend time, waste time. We have expressions like “Time is money.” What expressions does this society have involving time?

1. Recreation

Even very busy people usually have some time for recreation and leisure activities. What do people do, and how can you talk about these activities?

Beginning Learners:

Learn some words associated with leisure activities, such as games, sports, films or theatre or dance or musical performances, children’s toys and games, parks. The particular vocabulary will depend on the games or activities people do.

**Learning Activities:**

Use pictures of people or your family of dolls, as well as pictures representing the things people do for recreation. Have your LH say sentences like: “Ali is going to play football.” You point to Ali and the football to show you’ve understood.

***Intermediate Learners***:

Ask people to tell you about their own favorite leisure or recreation activities. Get a story about something they did recently, or get them to tell you how to play a particular game or activity. Listen several times: once for content, once for new words or grammar or for how the whole story is told (Discourse structure). Try to tell about what you like to do for recreation. Record yourself and ask your LH to retell your story, using appropriate grammar and vocabulary where you made mistakes. Listen to your version and your LH’s version of your story, noting the differences, then try again to tell your story.

1. Going Downtown or to the Mall

Where do people go to shop and eat and just get together with other people? Is there a business center in the middle of town? Or is there something like a shopping precinct or mall? What sorts of activities take place there besides shopping? Are there restaurants, exhibits, concerts?

Beginning Learners:

Learn some vocabulary to talk about shopping centers.

**Possible Vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Shop | Restaurant | ATM | Parking garage |
| Parking ticket | Shop assistant | Waiter | Bill |
| Receipt | Exhibition | Concert | Movie theatre |
| Department store | Grocery store | Market (open-air market) | Traditional market |

**Learning Activities:**

 Go out to a shopping center and take pictures, if this is appropriate. Later on use the ***Look and Listen*** technique with a LH to learn the names of different shops and other places in the shopping center. You can also use a plan or map of the shopping center or mall to learn to ask directions and follow directions to different shops or places in the mall. You could come up with a board game based on the mall, where you have to get to the right shop to match an item drawn on a card you pick from a pile. Use your imagination! The goal is to become very familiar with the vocabulary associated with this setting, so you can understand people talking about it later.

Intermediate Learners:

 Go to a shopping center with a friend from the culture and later get him or her to talk about your ***Shared Experience***. Record the story as always, and work on learning any vocabulary you don’t understand. Ask a friend to tell you about experiences he or she has had at a shopping center, and record those experiences to listen to and learn more.

1. Arts and Crafts

What sorts of things do people make? Are there people who specialize in particular crafts? Are there people who make their living from art? In order to talk about arts and crafts, you need to know the language associated with them.

Beginning Learners:

When you see decorative objects, or even useful objects decorated in interesting ways, ask the names of them and the people who make them.

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Baskets | Basket weavers | Weavers | Painters |
| Paint | Brushes | Clay | Pottery |
| Potters | Sculptors | Sculptures | Jewelry |
| Jewelers | Silver | Gold | Precious stones |
| Bronze | Wood | Carvers |  |

If possible take pictures of these people making things. Use the ***Look and Listen*** technique to learn to recognize the words for these craftspeople, the materials they use and the activities they do.

Intermediate Learners:

Use the ***Series*** technique to learn how to understand and tell about how to do a particular craft. Ask people who are the best weavers, potters, etc. and why? What is it about their work that makes it particularly good? Use these texts to work on comparatives and superlatives of adjectives, such as prettier, the most beautiful, etc. If you do a craft, try to talk about it, demonstrate it, teach someone how to do it. Record yourself and listen for areas in which you struggled to communicate. What words or structures do you need to learn?

1. Music, dance and drama

Every culture has some performance art, such as music, dancing and drama, and also a way to talk about these activities.

Beginning Learners:

Learn the names of different instruments, dances or dancing styles, and drama performances.

**Possible vocabulary:**

* Instrument names (such as drum, flute, stringed instruments, etc.)
* Names for people who play these instruments (such as drummer, flutist, guitarist, etc.)
* Song (and different kinds of songs, such as folk song, hymn, pop song, etc.)
* Singer
* Choir
* Orchestra or band
* Dance (and different kinds of dances, such as folk dance, ballet, -- whatever types are recognized in the culture)
* Dancer
* Play (theatrical production)
* Puppet
* Actor
* Performance
* Set
* Theatre
* Ticket

As with many other topics, take pictures or find pictures of as many of the vocabulary items as possible. Use ***Look and Listen*** techniques to learn the names, or make it more interesting by acting out the words: If you hear the word “drum” for instance, act out playing a drum and say “boom boom”. Act out dancing, or being a puppeteer or singing or whatever activity you hear mentioned. Then you say one of those words and ask your LH to act it out!

Intermediate Learners:

Get a short text from your LH about his or her favorite musician, dancer or actor. Ask what makes that person particularly good. Continue your work on comparatives and superlatives, as well and general comprehension of short oral texts. Learn who are some of the best-known and most popular artists in popular culture.

1. Domesticated Animals

Beginning Learners:

You probably have already learned the names of some animals, used to food or kept as pets, but explore this topic more. What animals are found on farms? What animals are commonly found in the home? What are the names of the baby animals? What noises do they make?

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cow/calf | Milk | Moo | Dog/puppy |
| Bark | Horse/foal | Neigh | Mule or donkey |
| Chicken/chick | Pig/piglet | Oink |  |
| Parrot or other tame bird | Any other domestic animals |

**Learning Activities:**

Use pictures of these animals to learn their names, using the ***Look and Listen*** technique. When your LH says the name of an animal, such as “Cow” you make a mooing sound. Ask if there is a children’s song, like Old McDonald, with the sounds of animals.

Intermediate Learners:

Ask more about animals, why they are kept: for work, for pets, as food, for example. Ask if people ever refer to other people as animals and what characteristic that represents. For example, if you call someone a pig in English it is an insult, because it refers to greed, or being dirty. What would it mean in this language? Record the answers and add them to your Listening Library.

1. Wild Animals

Learn how to talk about animals found in the wild in this country or that people know about in other countries.

Beginning Learners:

Learn the names of various wild animals, including fish, snakes and amphibians, predators, game animals and insects.

**Possible vocabulary:**

1. Fish: various fresh water and ocean fish, as well as parts of fish, such as fins, gills, tail etc.
2. Reptiles and amphibians, such as snakes, lizards, frogs etc.
3. Dangerous wild animals, such as lions, tigers, hippos, etc. Are people afraid of these animals?
4. Animals people hunt for food or sport

**Learning Activities:**

Take pictures or find pictures online or elsewhere of as many wild animals as you can. Use the ***Look and Listen*** technique to first learn to recognize, then to say the names of these animals. Note what categories the local people put different animals in. They might be quite different from the categories listed above. Sometimes there are categories like “creepy-crawly” things, or hot fruits and cold fruits. You will have to wait until later to understand why some things are categorized together, but if you hear the name of a category of animals, learn it.

Intermediate Learners:

See if you can go on a ***Shared Experience*** hunting or fishing expedition with people and then get them to talk about what you did and what you caught. Also, ask someone to talk about what wild animals they think are the most dangerous, and why. As always record these stories and listen to them for information, for new vocabulary, and for how stories are told. Add them to your listening library. The texts and stories you have worked through and listened to before should become easier to understand the more you listen to them.

1. Hunting and Fishing

Learn how to talk about animals found in the wild in this country or that people know about in other countries.

Beginning Learners:

Learn the names of various wild animals, including fish, snakes and amphibians, predators, game animals and insects.

**Possible vocabulary:**

1. Fish: various fresh water and ocean fish, as well as parts of fish, such as fins, gills, tail etc.
2. Reptiles and amphibians, such as snakes, lizards, frogs etc.
3. Dangerous wild animals, such as lions, tigers, hippos, etc. Are people afraid of these animals?
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**Learning Activities:**

Take pictures or find pictures online or elsewhere of as many wild animals as you can. Use the ***Look and Listen*** technique to first learn to recognize, then to say the names of these animals. Note what categories the local people put different animals in. They might be quite different from the categories listed above. Sometimes there are categories like “creepy-crawly” things, or hot fruits and cold fruits. You will have to wait until later to understand why some things are categorized together, but if you hear the name of a category of animals, learn it.

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1. Agriculture

Every country grows crops, but they vary widely in the crops they can grow and who and how they are grown. Learn to talk about agriculture.

Beginning Learners:

Learn the names of the major crops grown in the country and especially in the region where you are living. Learn vocabulary for different steps involved in preparing soil, sowing, fertilizing, cultivating and harvesting crops. Learn names for places the harvest is kept

**Possible vocabulary items:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Seed | Hoe (or other tools) | Tractor |
| Harvester | Cultivate  | Water (a verb, as in to water the crops) |
| Harvest  | Names of different crops | Weed (verb, as in to weed the field) |
| Silo or barn | Farmer | Hired worker |
| Planting season | Harvesting season |  |

See if you can visit a place where food is being grown – a farm, a garden, a rice paddy – whatever people are growing. Take pictures of the tools, of people doing things like hoeing, planting, harvesting. Take your pictures home and work with your LH to describe what people are doing in each picture.

Intermediate Learners:

Once you have learned some basic vocabulary, go out and join in the work in a ***Shared Experience.*** Then get someone who was there to talk about what you did. You can also ask them to tell you what crops are grown, which ones are exported, what are important sources of income for the country. Record the answers and work through the things you don’t understand. Try to talk about farming in your home country.

1. Ownership and Rental of property

This topic is not one that beginners can really talk about. They can learn a few words, like:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Landlord | Rent | Mortgage | Tenant | Lease |

 Intermediate and Advanced Learners

Ask the questions suggested in the culture exploration notes and record the answers for both language and culture learning purposes.

1. Hospitality and Visiting

This is an important social interaction activity. As you learn the rules for hospitality and visiting, you should also learn some “scripts” for what people talk about – often called small talk. You’ll also learn what topics are appropriate and expected, and which topics will embarrass people.

Beginning Learners:

Learn some typical scripts for either visiting people or receiving visitors. Learn what to say when offering people food and how to understand their reply – are they accepting the offer of food or giving a polite refusal when they say “thank you” for example. You can learn these by observing, but also ask your LH what people are likely to say in these situations. Then ***Role Play*** these simple dialogue exchanges with your LH.

Intermediate Learners:

Expand the basic ‘scripts’ you learned as a beginner and role play some ***Dialogue Variations*** for different kinds of situations or with different sorts of visitors or hosts or occasions of different formality.

1. Kinship and Family

Families are important to everyone, but societies differ in how closely related you need to be to be considered family. You need to learn not just the terms for the most basic family relations, but more distant relatives as well.

Beginning Learners:

You have probably already learned some words for basic nuclear family relationships, such as mother, father, child, son, daughter, baby, grandmother, grandfather. Use a family tree to learn the names for some other relatives. Bear in mind that some languages have different words for grandparents on different sides – for example, father’s mother may be different from mother’s mother. The same is true for uncles and aunts: mother’s brother may be different from father’s brother. Also, the names for different cousins of various degrees. Some languages also have different names for younger brother and older brother, as well as younger sister and older sister. It can be confusing at first, but if you use dolls or a family tree to make the terms more concrete that helps.

You can use a family tree and name each person on the tree. Then the LH can say” Miguel is Antonio’s (paternal) grandfather. He can later on ask you, “What relation is Antonio to Miguel?” You answer, “Grandson.” And so forth.

***Intermediate Learners***:

Go further into the family tree and learn the names for any relations you don’t yet know. Then ask people to tell you about their families and experiences they have had with them. Talk about your family, until you are comfortable thinking about your family using the distinctions and terms in your new language.

1. Sex and morality

This topic is mostly appropriate for Intermediate and Advanced learners, rather than Beginners, because of the need for sensitivity and a sense of the emotional connotations of words. Often there are crude words used to refer to topics like sex, but there almost always are other ways to refer to such topics – either technical, scientific terms or euphemisms. For example, “sleeping with someone” is a euphemism for having sex. There are other more graphic terms. Ask someone to tell you if a word is considered a curse word or a really crude word, and avoid using the crude words yourself.

You need to have established a relationship and confidence with someone before beginning to discuss such topics. Even then, be sure to ask someone of the same sex.

In a broader sense, you can ask about what is considered immoral behavior, and what are the worst sins or offences against morality. In other words, you can ask “What makes a person a bad person?” or “What is the worst thing a person can do to another person?”

1. Pregnancy

This topic, like most involving the life cycle, requires considerable language proficiency for in-depth discussion, but it is possible to learn some basic vocabulary early.

Beginning Learners:

**Possible vocabulary:**

* Pregnant (and any euphemisms, such as “expecting a baby”
* Barren (unable to have children)
* Miscarriage
* Abortion
* Morning sickness

***Intermediate Learners***:

Ask some of the questions suggested in the culture guide and record the answers. Remember to ask about people in general – not any specific person. Record your answers and add them to your Listening Library. You could ask a woman who has children what it was like when she was pregnant. (Only ask this question if you are a woman.) Otherwise, a man could ask another man what it was like when his wife was pregnant.

1. Birth

This topic, like most involving the life cycle, requires considerable language proficiency for in-depth discussion, but it is possible to learn some basic vocabulary early.

Beginning Learners:

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Give birth | Be born | Midwife |
| Doctor | Deliver a baby | Umbilical cord |
| Nursery | Crib | Diapers (if any) |
| Baby clothes | Twins | Baptism (or other birth ceremony) |

***Intermediate Learners***:

Ask some of the questions suggested in the culture guide and record the answers. Remember to ask about people in general – not any specific person. Record your answers and add them to your Listening Library. You could ask a mother or a midwife what it was like when she gave birth or helped with a birth.

1. Child-rearing

This topic, like most involving the life cycle, requires considerable language proficiency for in-depth discussion, but it is possible to learn some basic vocabulary early.

Beginning Learners:

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Raise a child | Discipline | Well-behaved child |
| Badly-behaved child (brat) | Wean a child | Nanny or baby-sitter |
| Chores |  |  |

Intermediate and Advanced Learners:

Ask some of the questions suggested in the culture guide and record the answers. Remember to ask about people in general – not any specific person. Record your answers and add them to your Listening Library. You can ask parents what they think is important about raising children –what they want them to learn, what they expect of them at different ages.

1. Coming of age

This topic, like most involving the life cycle, requires considerable language proficiency for in-depth discussion, but it is possible to learn some basic vocabulary early.

Beginning Learners:

**Possible vocabulary:**

* Teen-ager
* Coming-of-age ceremony (such as bar mitzvah, quinceanos, etc.)
* Age-mates
* Puberty

***Intermediate Learners***:

Ask some of the questions suggested in the culture guide and record the answers. Remember to ask about people in general – not any specific person. Record your answers and add them to your Listening Library. You can ask at what age a boy is considered a man, and what rights and responsibilities he then has. You can ask the same of a girl: when is she considered a woman? When is she old enough to marry, for example? You could ask someone to tell you a story about when he or she came of age – what ceremony, if any, they went through and how it felt to come of age.

1. Courtship

This topic, like most involving the life cycle, requires considerable language proficiency for in-depth discussion, but it is possible to learn some basic vocabulary early.

Beginning Learners:

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Dating | Courtship | Engagement |
| Fiancé or fiancée | Dowry | Bride-price |

Intermediate and Advanced Learners:

Ask some of the questions suggested in the culture guide and record the answers. Remember to ask about people in general – not any specific person. Record your answers and add them to your Listening Library. Ask someone to tell about their own courtship. What did they look for in a husband or wife? Were they expected to choose their own life partner or did the parents choose? Was there a formal betrothal ceremony? You can add these interviews to your listening library.

1. Marriage and Divorce

This topic, like most involving the life cycle, requires considerable language proficiency for in-depth discussion, but it is possible to learn some basic vocabulary early.

Beginning Learners:

**Possible vocabulary:**

* Wedding (the ceremony)
* Marriage (state of being married)
* Single
* Divorce
* Divorced (having been divorced)
* Annulment (if different from divorce)
* Reception or wedding party
* Attendants (are there special people like best man, maid of honor, bridesmaids, involved in the wedding?)
* Person who marries people (what is the name of the official who marries people?)
* Place where the wedding is held
* Wedding clothes

Intermediate and Advanced Learners:

Ask some of the questions suggested in the culture guide and record the answers. Remember to ask about people in general – not any specific person. Record your answers and add them to your Listening Library.

Ask a person to tell about their own wedding. Where was it held? Who came? What happened? Who performed the ceremony? What did they wear? Were there other people in the wedding party? What did they do?

If possible attend a wedding ceremony and observe as much as you can. Ask a friend about it later.

1. Old Age

This part of the life cycle is inevitable for all who are fortunate enough to have a long life. Older people can be a great source of cultural information, and often have time to talk and listen. Start off by learning some vocabulary and proceed.

Beginning Learners:

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Old age | Middle-aged | Adult |
| Old man | Old woman | Elders |

Intermediate and Advanced Learners:

Ask your LH to talk about when a person is considered old. Ask about the elders of the group. What influence do they have? Is there any concept of “retirement?” What do older people contribute to society?

Try to interview some older people and ask them to tell you about events in their life. Also ask them how things have changed since they were young. You can learn a lot about the history of the language group from these life history interviews. They can also form part of your Listening Library

1. Death

It comes to us all, but how is it viewed and commemorated in this culture? Learn some language to talk about that.

Beginning Learners:

You probably need to be at least a high beginner to elicit some of this vocabulary.

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Die | Dead body | Funeral | Wake |
| Mourn | Mourner | Widow | Widower |
| Orphan | Suicide | Murder | Accident |
| Terminal illness |  |  |  |

Some of these terms might be hard to elicit. Try using stick figures to tell a little story about someone getting ill and dying. That may help in getting the vocabulary you need, and in learning to talk about people you know who have died.

Intermediate and Advanced Learners:

If possible attend a funeral or wake with someone you know, so it turns into a *Shared Experience*. Afterwards ask that person to tell you what happened and why certain things are done. You can ask some of the other questions in the cultural guide. Understanding people talking about life after death (if there is such a belief) requires fairly advanced language proficiency, but it can be a valuable addition to your Listening Library.

1. Education

Children in every culture have a lot to learn. How and where do they learn? Do they learn to read and write? If so, in what languages? Learn to talk about education.

Beginning Learners:

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| School | Teacher | Students |
| Primary school | Kindergarten | Middle-school or high school |
| University | Boarding school | Registration |
| Enrollment | Tuition or school fees | Textbooks |
| Graduation |  |  |
| Degree (or whatever you get when you complete University) |
| Diploma (or whatever you get for finishing secondary school) |

***Intermediate Learners***:

If possible, see if you can go to school one day and observe what happens. You can also ask children what they do at school, or ask a teacher about what it is like to teach school. Ask someone to tell you about what it was like when they went to school. If people don’t attend a formal school in your area, then ask parents what their children need to learn. It may be hard for people to talk about how they teach children to develop skills they need for life, but you can ask. Record what people say, and add these to your Listening Library.

1. Wood, Stone, Brick, and Plastic

What materials are things made out of, and how are these materials worked and used?

Beginning Learners:

Learn some basic vocabulary associated with the basic materials and what is done with them.

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |
| --- |
| Wood of different kinds of trees (What are the trees and the wood called?) |
| Saw | Chop | Lumber |
| Board | Sawdust | Carve |
| Stone (different sorts of stone used for construction or to make other things: like marble, granite, limestone, etc.) |
| Block of stone | Brick | Clay (or mud used to make bricks) |
| Cinderblocks | Cement | Sand |
| Kiln (if used) | Bricklayer | Stonemason |
| Lumberman or carpenter |  |
| Tools or materials used to make things (saw, axe, mortar, nails, hammer, trowel, etc.) |
| Plastic and materials made from plastic (bags, bottles, etc.) |

***Intermediate Learners***:

Get some ***Series*** texts about how to make bricks, or cut lumber, or make a house or whatever is appropriate. Go on some ***Shared Experiences*** to see people at work with these materials. Your Listening Library should be growing! Go back and listen to some of your earlier recordings. They should seem easy by now.

1. Giving and receiving gifts

Everyone likes to give and receive gifts, but how do you talk about it? Start with some basic vocabulary and learn some basic scripts for what you say when giving or receiving a gift.

Beginning Learners:

**Possible vocabulary:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gift | Thank you | Wrap | Box | Bag |

Ask your LH to ***Role Play*** giving a gift or receiving a gift. What do you say in each role? When would you give a gift? What would you give to whom?

Intermediate Learners:

Ask more about the kinds of gifts people give, who they give them to, and what kinds of gifts would be appropriate for different occasions and for different people. ***Role Play*** these situations. Also ask people if they have ever received an inappropriate gift. What made it embarrassing or inappropriate? Try telling about the kinds of gifts that are appropriate where you come from – for weddings, or other occasions.

1. Trade and exchange

How and where are goods exchanged and how do you hire someone to do some work for you? Start by learning some basic vocabulary about markets and shops and employees.

Beginners:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Market | Vendor | Buyer |
| Market stall | Shop | Shopkeeper |
| Patron | Employer | Employee |
| Guard or night watchman | Salary | Contract |
| Maid or house help | Laundry—someone who takes in laundry |
| Gardener or handyman |  |

Intermediate learners:

Ask where a typical family would buy their food, how and where their clothes are washed, whether or not they would hire someone from outside the family to do work for them. Ask what a typical salary would be for different types of work. Record your interviews to add to your Listening Library. What questions do you still have?

1. Social Organization

How do people identify themselves and other people? What sorts of categories do they put people in?

Beginning Learners:

**Some possible vocabulary:**

1. ***Nationalties*** – what are the words for people from different countries around the world? Start with major countries often in the news and countries in the same area as the one whose language you are learning.
2. ***Regions of the country***-- Are there names for people from different parts of the country? For example, in the US you might refer to Southerners or Northerners or Mid-Westerners. You could also refer to people by the state or city they live in: Californians, New Yorkers, etc.
3. ***Occupations:*** How are people’s occupations referred to? Are there names for farmers, teachers, professors, tailors, etc.?

***Intermediate Learners***:

Ask some of the questions suggested in the cultural exploration guide and record the answers. Listen to them not only for cultural information, but for language cues, such as reasons, background information, cause and effect.

1. Prestige

How do people identify themselves and other people? What sorts of categories do they put people in?

Beginning Learners:

The vocabulary you learn really depends on the way society is organized.

***Social Status:*** are there names for people of different social status? For example, the names of different castes in India. In other societies there may be fewer distinctions. How are leaders referred to? For example, chief, president, prime minister, king, prince, etc. Are there terms like “working class”, “upper-class” and so forth?

***Intermediate Learners***:

Ask about people who are respected in society and people considered of high status, and record the answers. Note that people of high status might not necessarily be those who are most respected. Listen to the recordings not only for cultural information, but for language cues, such as reasons, background information, cause and effect.

1. Conversational Nuances

The culture exploration guide gives you good suggestions about what you are looking for in what is NOT said as well as what is said. Here are a few more suggestions for your language learning

Beginning Learners:

At the beginning it is hard to pick up on nuances, but do pay special attention to people’s body language and facial expressions, and for silences where you would expect people to say something. These all may be cues that people are trying to express something they are embarrassed to express directly.

***Intermediate Learners***:

Work with a LH to learn how to give hints or pick up on things you don’t understand, but which you suspect may be hints or nuances of conversation. You will have to develop trust with your LH before he or she may be willing to express things directly to you to help you understand.

1. Friendship and Alienation

What does it mean to be a friend? The answers can be really different in different cultures. First learn some of the words, and then find out more about what it all means.

Beginning Learners:

Try to learn the words for friend, acquaintance, neighbor, or any other similar term. See if you can get some simple sentences using these words, which help you to understand what it means to be a friend.

For example: “She is my friend. I would do anything for her.” “She isn’t really a friend.
She is more an acquaintance. “

***Intermediate Learners***:

Get some short texts describing what friends would do for each other. Ask how many friends people usually have, and what obligations you would feel toward a friend. Ask how a friendship might be broken or restored. Record these texts and listen to them. You might also try to describe what is different in your home culture.

1. Elections

Be very careful as an outsider when talking about elections, which can be a sensitive subject or one people feel strongly about. You can start by learning some words to refer to elections and government leaders, but be very careful about offering an opinion yourself.

Beginning Learners:

**Possible vocabulary:** (Bear in mind that the words will reflect the political organization of the area, so you may not find words for all of these terms listed in English).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Election | Vote |
| Political party – general term and also the names of different parties |
| Ballot | Candidate |
| President | Member of parliament |
| Mayor | Councilman |
| Elder |  |

***Intermediate Learners***:

Ask about the election process – how it works, who votes, etc. Remember it is safer to ask about facts than opinions. You might ask how long a particular party has been in power. You could also ask about the history of the country – did it have a different political system in the past? Record people talking about these things and listen to your texts

1. Know your country – Symbols

Learn as much as you can about the symbols used to represent the country and different regions in it. People usually appreciate it! Any if they refer to a symbol, you want to know what the associate with it.

Beginning Learners:

As suggested in the cultural exploration notes, learn the national anthem and sing along when the people sing it. Note times dates and occasions when it is played.

**Possible vocabulary:**

Learn the names of major cities and regions of the country, if you haven’t already learned them. Learn the names of national teams, such as the soccer team.

Intermediate Learners:

Learn any nicknames used to refer to major cities and the people who live there, such as The Big Apple (New York), the Windy City (Chicago), Scouse (people who live in Liverpool, England), Brummie (people who live in Birmingham, England) etc. Ask if there are stereotypes for people who live in different cities.

1. Know your country – Capitol city

Learn about the history and major sites in the capitol city

Beginning Learners:

**Possible vocabulary:**

Learn how to refer to the capitol city, its main regions, streets, buildings, people and landmarks.

**Learning activity.**

Use pictures -- even picture postcards --of the capital city and get people to name what is in each picture. Then get your LH to name one of the things or people and you point to the appropriate picture.

***Intermediate Learners***:

Ask about the history of the capitol city, how people feel about it (Pride? Too big and congested?). Ask about major landmarks and the history associated with them. Remember to record and listen! Tell people about the landmarks in the capitol city of your own country.

1. Know your country – Government

Learn as much as you can about the system of government in the country and its history. See note on section about elections, about the need for sensitivity when asking about politics, but it is safer to ask about facts than opinions about the government.

There is considerable overlap with the lesson on elections, LL55. Consult that lesson and the cultural exploration notes for ideas on vocabulary to learn.

1. Know your country – Geography

Beginning Learners:

Learn the names for different features of landscape: hill, mountain, river, lake, plain, woods, forest, savannah, desert, etc. Learn the names for the major lakes and rivers, mountain chains, etc.

Use maps, an atlas, pictures of different kinds of areas of the country. Use ***Look and Listen*** techniques based on these pictures.

Intermediate and Advanced Learners:

Ask about any legends or stories connected with different geographical or topological features. Do they have any religious significance? Are they considered important to the economy of the country or region? Consult the cultural exploration notes for ideas on more things you could ask about the geography of the country, including major crops or products associated with different regions.

1. Know your country – History

It’s important to learn as much as you can about the history of the country or region where the language is spoken.

Beginning Learners:

Look at some children’s school books to see if there are pictures of famous people in the history of the country or region. Learn their names and why they are famous. For example, in US history you would learn words like Pilgrims, settlers, Indians, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, etc.

If you are learning a language that isn’t used in school, ask someone to tell you the names of some important people in history and why they are famous.

Intermediate Learners:

Ask people to tell you who some of the most important people in their history are. Go to museums that show the history of the country or town. If you can’t read what is written about these people, go with a friend from the culture and then ask afterwards about the most important people and events at the museum. Record the answers. If you can read the language, read some of the children’s school books telling about the history of the people. Or ask some of the older people to tell you about the history of the people group.

1. \* Guided Discovery Activities for Language and Culture Learners available at [Lifelearner.org/culture](lifelearner.org/culture) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The words given as possible vocabulary are just to give you ideas of the kind of vocabulary you might encounter that would be appropriate for this lesson. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)