

Using Magazine Pictures in the LCTL Classroom

Sample Lesson Plan Overview

Levels: Beginning-Advanced

Aims: Introduce vocabulary and grammatical forms; serve as a discussion stimulus of cultural practices

Class Time: variable (30 min-several class periods)

Preparation Time: variable (20 min-1 hr.)

Resources: Magazine pictures, with or without captions; activity related worksheets

Visual aids do not have to simply be side adornments for lessons. With a little thought, they can be the basis for lessons on a wide variety of topics--ranging from culture to idioms to grammar. Well-chosen pictures have a larger context with a wealth of implicit vocabulary and forms that can be exploited for language teaching.

What do we have here?—using magazine pictures

Let's explore together - Using magazine pictures to inspire research

What do we have here?—using magazine pictures

Level: Beginning-advanced

Aims: Provide students with the language necessary to express uncertainty, practice descriptive adjectives

Class time: 30 minutes

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Resources: Magazine pictures

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but which thousand words? It may not always be immediately clear what “story” the picture/advertisement is telling. In this lesson, students practice describing what they know and inferring what they don’t know.

Procedure:

1. Before class, locate engaging magazine pictures (see example in appendix). It may help to mount them for durability.
2. In class,
 - a. Present a picture. Ask students for a description of the picture, encouraging them to ask questions about the scenario.
 - b. Note student responses on the blackboard or overhead.
3. Turn the questions into statements of various degrees of certainty.
 - a. “Are they at a party?” → “They could be at a party.”
 - b. “Is the boy his son?” → “The boy probably is his son.”
 - c. “Why is the man wearing a suit?” → “The party might be very formal.”
4. Formally introduce ways of express uncertainty (e.g., modal verbs, adverbials of uncertainty).
5. Tell students that this is a picture taken at a local wedding, and include any relevant information about local wedding traditions.
6. Elicit hypotheses about the picture using the forms presented.
 - a. That man probably is a friend of the groom.
 - b. The boy might be his nephew.
 - c. They could be playing a game they often play.
7. Groups students into pairs or groups of 3-4,
 - a. Give each group its own picture
 - b. Tell students that the pictures are a clue about the people in the picture.
 - c. Have students pretend to be detectives and ask them to write out 3-4 possible conclusions about the people in the pictures.

Caveats and Options:

1. This activity can be tailored to any level by simplifying (or making for complex) the questions asked about the picture or the language focal point.

2. Multiple pictures can help beginners use adjectives describing color, emotion, weather, etc.
3. The lesson could be part of a larger lesson on local wedding traditions or celebrations.

Acknowledgements:

Picture used with permission from Andrea Wong.



Let's explore together - Using magazine pictures to inspire research

Level: Beginning-advanced

Aims: Provide students with opportunity to find out more about a cultural landmark, practice descriptive adjectives

Class time: 10 minutes for the first phase of the lesson, 25 minutes for the second phase

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Resources: Magazine picture

Virtually all cultures have a famous image that is known beyond its borders such as Mt. Kilimanjaro, the Taj Mahal, the Great Wall of China, or Lenin. In this activity a famous picture from the culture is used to inspire students to do some outside research and collaborate to gain mutual understanding.

Procedure:

1. Phase one
 - a. Before class, locate a large picture of a famous cultural image from the target language culture. This may be a building, geographical feature, person, etc.
 - b. Present the picture to the class. Elicit descriptions of the picture and its significance. If students do not know the image at all, ask students to guess what the picture is and why it might be an important cultural symbol. List student contributions on the board.
 - c. For homework, ask students to do research to find out more about this image. They may do the research in any language, but class discussion will be conducted in the target language as always.
2. Phase two
 - a. In the following class period, put students into groups of 3-5. Have students write a list or paragraph on what they found out about the history of the image, its location (unless it is a person), its role in contemporary society, etc.
 - b. Have groups send one representative to the blackboard (or overhead) and take turns to list interesting information about the picture.
 - c. When the list is complete, ask students what was the most interesting fact presented and why.

Caveats and Options:

1. This activity can be tailored to any level by simplifying (or making more complex) the questions asked about the picture or the language focal point. It may be good to send students home with specific points to try to find.
2. A grammar focus can be highlighted for the writing section of the lesson.