

First Class Mingle

Age: 11/12 - Adults

Level: Intermediate and above

Aims

- Mingling speaking activity
- Students speak to everyone in the class and find out as much information as possible about each other
- Review question forms
- (optional reporting questions with higher levels)

Materials

- worksheet (see below)

I usually use this in a second class with a new group. Having spent the first class getting to know each other, this activity really helps to break the ice. It gets students talking to each other. They have a purpose as they have to find a specific person to answer their questions. It helps students remember each other's names and they also produce a lot of English. The fact that students know they have to find each person and speak to them motivates them and in my experience has got even the -, quietest students up and speaking to each other

It's a very simple idea; the only complicated part is explaining the instructions so make sure you do this very clearly at the beginning of the class.

1. Give each student a copy of the worksheet and explain that they must listen very carefully and all try to complete everything at the same time. Each student writes his or her name at the top of the worksheet in the "My name is " space. Then pass the sheet to the left.
2. The person on the left must write a question using the beginning of the question given and then write their name in the space at the end of the line. Make sure students understand that the last space is for the name of the person who wrote the question NOT the answer which is what most students seem to want to write. For students who are short on ideas, suggest they use the pictures as a hint. When they have written the question they pass the sheet to the left. Continue doing this until there are 15 different questions on the sheet with 15 different names beside them. (obviously if you have fewer/more students in a class, you can delete/add more questions, I usually make sure there is one question from each student so they all get to speak to each other.)
3. When the last question has been completed, the person who wrote it has to return the worksheet to the person whose name is at the top of the sheet. If this is a 1st or 2nd class, students are unlikely to know each others' names so insist this is where their English practice begins and make sure as they're wandering around trying to find the owner of the sheet they are actually asking in English "What's your name?" "Are you?"

4. Students then have their own sheet and have to find each person who asked them a question. *Oh, so you're John, you asked me "Have you ever been to England?". Yes, I have, I went there in the summer for 2 weeks.* With higher levels this can be adapted to review reported questions "You asked me if I had ever been to England." although the primary aim is for students to be up and mingling and talking trying to find out as much information as possible about each other. Make sure that students know they should try and answer the questions as fully as possible. This activity can last anything from 20 minutes to an hour depending on the class.

5. As a follow up activity with monolingual young learners I usually make a list of L1 expressions I hear and write them on the board, getting the students to translate them into English. This is a valid activity as students realise they do know the English and you can reiterate that the classroom is a place where English is to be spoken.

Typical lists include:

Come on.

Hang on a minute.

What was your name?

What does this mean/say?

Who is(John)?

It doesn't matter.

I don't know.

I can't remember.