

How I began my first year classes:

I began the year with classical TPR. Because I always did storytelling-like scenarios during this classical TPR phase, my students were acting out stories and answering questions to stories from the very beginning. During the TPR phase, students learned as many verbs as I could think of, all of the objects in the classroom, body parts, colors, lots of adjectives, prepositions, nouns, etc. Get a book on TPR to give you some ideas. Additionally, they learned greetings, name, age, weather, and geography of France. I continued to use their knowledge of the geography of France all year long.

An important daily activity was listening to songs while reading the lyrics. My favorites were:

“Soyons Amis” <http://yadeeda.tripod.com/index.html>

“Sing, Dance, Laugh, and Eat Quiche.” <http://www.singdancelaugh.com/>

I believe that listening to the songs, looking at the lyrics, and gesturing the main word (or words) from each line of the song helped my students to get a jump start on French. They were comfortable reading all of those words, they knew what the words sound like and meant. I tested songs by verifying that the students knew the meanings of the words.

Moving to Look, I Can Talk

These are the pms that I used to teach the vocabulary for chapter one in the Accelerated book. I tried the pms in the accelerated book, but I wound up writing my own. I asked 5 or 6 questions after each statement. This enabled the students to make active contributions to the stories all period long. **Please do NOT tell the stories exactly as they are written!** In order to truly personalize your stories, you must allow your students to contribute their own ideas. Keep your focus on the words of the day, not on the story line! As long as you repeat the words in enough different contexts that the words become as automatic as speaking English, the story line is unimportant. (I say that you need to say each vocabulary word 70 times. I made up the number in order to guarantee that students hear each word in all contexts.)

Notice that I have more than three words on the first three days. That is because they already know “regarde, parle, pleure, chat.” These words were used in the TPR unit. The verbs are already in the students’ dictionaries in the “vous” form. Additionally, “s’appelle” is familiar. They have known “Je m’appelle” since day one and I have used “Comment s’appelle-t-il?” almost every day. Therefore only three words per day are actually new.

Hand out the entire chapter vocabulary list the first day of a chapter and tell the English meanings of all of the words on the list. Students write the English meanings on their vocabulary lists. I believe that this pre-teaching of the vocabulary list enabled students to know exactly what was going on in class. The words are grouped by day. Students knew what we were going to do the next day, what we had done if they were absent, and what to study if they wanted to study.

When telling the students the English meanings, be careful to explain the importance of every word. They need to know that “un” means “a” and that “le” means “the.” Explain that “il/elle” means “he/she,” and that “lui” means “to him or to her.” Since “dit” means “tells,” then #2 means “he/she tells him or her.” I had students underline “dit” and underline tells. Then I had them circle “lui” and circle “to him or her.” In that way their vocabulary list clarified structure for them.

A final word about gestures: I find it tedious to describe a gesture for each word. If you have trouble thinking of a gesture, you can ask your students or you can go to

ASL Browser <http://commtechlab.msu.edu/sites/aslweb/browser.htm>

Look, I Can Talk

Chapter 1

Vocabulary

1. il y a
2. Il/elle lui dit
3. le chat
4. il//elle regarde
5. il//elle aime

6. il//elle lui donne
7. il//elle sait
8. il//elle parle
9. il//elle a

10. il//elle s'appelle
11. il//elle pleure
12. maintenant
13. il//elle va

14. il//elle est triste
15. autre
16. vers

LICT

Chapter 1

Day 1

il y a
lui dit
chat
regarde
aime

Il y a un garçon. Le garçon s'appelle Guy. Guy cherche dix **chats**. Il marche à Pets R Us. Il y a une fille à Pets R Us. La fille s'appelle Rose. Rose lui **dit** «Il y a neuf chats.»

Guy nage en Australie. Le vice-président d'Australie lui dit, «Il y a dix chats.» Guy **regarde** les dix chats. Les dix chats sont bleus. Guy n'**aime** pas les chats bleus. Il aime les chats blancs. Il nage à Colorado Springs.

Teaching suggestions:

Be sure to use the names of your students or celebrities. Let them pick what store he goes to, how many cats he wants, the name of the girl, and have him return to your home town. I played with the blue part. I said, "Guy regarde les dix chats. Guy est content?" Of course everybody said, "Oui." I looked at them and said, "Non! Guy regarde les dix chats. Mais il y a un problème!" Everyone is coached to say, "Oh, non! Oh, non!" whenever there is a problem. I continued, "Oui, Guy regarde les dix chats. Il y a un problème avec les chats. Quel est le problème?" They would make a few guesses (some of them in English — I reacted with all kinds of enthusiasm when a kid tried a response in French.) And then I would tell them the problem: "Les dix chats sont bleus!" In my opinion this is about as bizarre as beginning students can handle. If you get too bizarre early on, it confuses them.

Day 2

lui donne
sait
parle
a

Il y a une fille. La fille a un problème. Elle a une grande tête, et elle n'a pas de cheveux. Elle marche à Cost Cutters. À Cost Cutters il y a un garçon. La fille **parle** avec le garçon. Le garçon **sait** la solution au problème. Le garçon **lui donne** du Rogaine.

Teaching suggestions:

Be sure that you talk to the actors ahead of time so that they know what will happen. If a student comes up to act and has to do something that is unappealing, it can ruin the whole class for acting all year long! A girl may not want to be big-headed and bald. (A boy can play the role; that just makes it funnier) If you are in the habit of chatting with students before class every day, you will have no trouble finding someone who will play the role of a big-headed bald girl. Especially if you have a basketball for the kid to hold in front of his face, having it represent the head! Alternatively, use a bag or a pillow on the head to represent the big head. This sort of thing gives the sparkler a legitimate excuse to be cute in class. If you appreciate the sparkler's unique contribution to your story, you can stop this same student from OVER-doing it by whispering in her ear, "Hang on, I need to teach French now. Just hold still for a couple of minutes." Students are thrilled to be your assistant teacher and they are very willing to cooperate with you in this way.

Day 3

s'appelle
pleure
maintenant
va

Il y a un garçon. Le garçon **s'appelle** Guy. Guy n'a pas de nombril. Tout le monde le regarde et rit. Guy **pleure**. Guy **va** à la lune. Il y a beaucoup de nombrils à la lune. Il y a une fille à la lune, aussi. La fille s'appelle Louise. Louise lui donne un nombril. **Maintenant** Guy sourit.

Teaching suggestions:

This story was a home run for me. I had several pieces of construction paper with a belly button drawn on it. (Just a circle with an arc inside it.) The papers were gaudy yellow and orange, nothing at all realistic. Students who have belly buttons wear this paper over their shirts. I taped it on with masking tape. The girl on the moon has a belly button (of course) and there are lots of belly buttons lying on the floor around her.

That is so obvious. When you look at the moon, you can see that it is just covered with bellybuttons! Some people call them craters, but WE know better! If you want to assign homework: Illustrate the story in class, have them tell the story in French to a parent for homework.

Day 4

est

triste

autre

vers

Il y a une fille. Elle **est triste**. Elle n'a pas de nez. Elle va à Noses R Us. Un garçon est à Noses R Us. La fille marche **vers** lui. Le garçon lui donne un nez; c'est le nez d'un éléphant. Elle n'aime pas le nez, elle est triste, elle dit, "Un **autre** nez!" Il lui donne le nez de (hockey player, Cyrano de Bergerac, whatever the kids suggest.) Il lui donne un joli nez. (Maybe the nose of a movie star or one from a cute kid in class.) Maintenant la fille est contente.

Teaching suggestions:

This was another home run. In one class she went to the flea market at Colorado Springs. When she tried on the big nose, a cute guy yelled her name and she turned around really fast and her nose hit another person, knocking him down. In another class her big nose got closed in a door. (Be careful that you do not have a nose problem in your class!) The story works just as well with another object. The girl could not have an arm, an ear, or a French book. Remember that you are teaching the four vocabulary words and the structure of the French language. There is absolutely nothing sacred about these pms. In fact, if you can get AWAY from these pms and let the kids make up the story, your class will be better. Just have this story in the back of your mind. When you go into class, my suggested pms will be a skeleton for you and your class to flesh out into a real story line.

The real class period will go like this:

*Il y a une fille. Elle **est triste**. Elle n'a pas de _____. Elle va à _____. Un garçon est à _____. La fille marche **vers** lui. Le garçon lui donne un _____; c'est le _____ d'un _____. Elle n'aime pas le _____, elle est triste, elle dit, "Un **autre** _____!" Il lui donne le*

_____ de (hockey player, Cyrano de Bergerac, whatever the kids suggest.) Il lui donne un joli _____. Maintenant la fille est contente.

Mini-story

The purpose of the mini-story is to recycle all of the words from the week. It is different from a pms in three important ways:

1. you teach no new words
2. you do not worry about getting repetitions of the words
3. you focus on the story line. Students contribute ONLY details; they do not change the story line

Il ya un chat parisien. Le chat s'appelle Misty. Misty est gris. Misty aime Paris. Misty parle français. Misty dit, «Miao» en français. Misty va au Louvre. Il y a une dame au Louvre. La dame s'appelle «la Joconde.» La dame sourit. Misty lui dit, «Miao.» La dame ne répond pas. Elle sourit. Misty aime le fromage. Elle aime le fromage français. Elle adore le fromage camembert. Elle déteste le fromage Velveeta. Misty est triste. Elle n'a pas de fromage. Elle pleure. La Joconde ne pleure pas; elle sourit. Un autre chat va au Louvre. Il s'appelle Minou. Minou a beaucoup de fromage. Il a du fromage suisse et du fromage camembert. Minou marche vers Misty. Minou lui donne du fromage camembert. Maintenant Misty sourit, Minou sourit, et la Joconde sourit.

Teaching suggestions:

I like having a cultural tidbit or two in mini-stories. In this mini-story, the students can learn the following cultural tidbits:

- *Paris is the capital of France (if they don't know already)*
- *the Louvre is a huge museum in Paris*
- *France makes over 350 varieties of cheese; it is a major French industry*
- *Camembert is a French cheese (good idea to offer some to them today)*
- *Mona Lisa is called "la Joconde" and she is in the Louvre. (good idea to have a picture to show them)*
- *Mona Lisa is famous for her smile. (Kids don't all know things they ought to know)*
- *Minou is a common name for a cat, it is the same thing as "kitty."*

Take your time telling this mini-story, teaching the cultural tidbits along with the language. Have posters of the Louvre hanging on the wall. Tell them that Léonard de Vinci (Italian) painted la Joconde. You can do this all in French. Just ask someone what you said. If a student is unable to translate into English, then you translate it, write a word on the board, rephrase the statement, do whatever you need to do make yourself 100% comprehensible. Ask a few questions until everyone understands exactly what you said. Back up about three sentences, and retell the part that leads up to where you were, make sure that EVERYONE knows exactly what you are saying, and go on to the next sentence in the ministory.

Today (or tomorrow) you will need to check out the Look, I Can Talk! student books. I always skipped the page with the illustrated vocabulary words. I began by asking students to say as many sentences as they possibly could about each illustrated episode of the chapter story. They gave the girl a name, talked about how they couldn't tell the boy from the girl, said that she had a cat, a head, hair, eyes, a nose, etc. Everything they could possibly say. They could say that she doesn't have legs in this picture. They could say that her shirt is yellow, just keep encouraging them. Get excited about every single contribution. Let them know that their budding French is amazing. Then we did all the rest of the activities in the chapter. It took about a week.

I never stopped doing songs, I dedicated at least four to five minutes per period to listening to a song and reading the lyrics.

The chapter test had a list of 50 vocabulary words (all of the chapter words plus words from the dictionary, songs, any words we have learned), a reading that they had to answer questions about, cultural questions (from the cultural things they learned all year, including the tidbits from the mini-story, and they had to write a story using 6 words from the vocabulary list on the front side of the test!

Grade the composition using a rubric.