

LESSON PLAN

I Want to be an Ambassador!

Build Confidence to Learn a New Language

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LESSON PLAN: *I Want to be an Ambassador! Build Confidence to Learn a New Language*

OVERVIEW & RATIONALE

This **Teachers' Resource** is specifically designed for foreign language classrooms, and educators who are tasked with encouraging students to enroll in a foreign language class; and/or to help students who *are* enrolled to build confidence in learning a new language early in the curriculum.

This Teachers' Resource includes a detailed presentation script, suggested topics for Q&A, and a PowerPoint to use as a visual aid to support messaging.

This resource has been created to align with American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, providing a foundation to promote goals of communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities, to stress the application of learning a language beyond the instructional setting. <https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/publications/standards/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf>

In our increasingly global society, speaking multiple languages is a tremendous asset for young people as they enter the job market, or even just to socialize and collaborate with people from diverse populations. But learning a foreign language could be an intimidating task, especially if that language uses a different writing system and tones and pronunciations than the language one currently speaks.

This **Teachers' Resource** is an excellent tool to help build a comfort level in students by presenting the many ways in which we use language for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement – and that's all illustrated with a fun introduction to the most commonly spoken language on the planet: Chinese.

This Teachers' Resource is highly adaptable for distance-learning; and, it can be used as a guideline for an instructor who would like to pre-record this presentation.

This Teachers' Resource is designed to be used in tandem with the Luminari video *I Want to be an Ambassador! Build Confidence to Learn a New Language* <https://www.luminari.org/camp-delicious-online/> copyright 2020 Luminari All Rights Reserved

GRADE LEVEL OF TARGET GROUP: 8th – 10th grade. Adaptable for 6th – 12th graders.

TOTAL TIME: Can be delivered in a 30 - 45-minute session, depending on class size.

PRESENTATION

Supplies: Internet connection; SmartBoard or ability to project instructor's screen on overhead.

OPEN:

I'm here today to provide information that will help students who are deciding whether or not to take a foreign language course. I know some of you may be a little worried about the challenges of learning a new language, so my goal today is to help lessen those fears and help you build the confidence to enjoy the process!

ALTERNATE OPEN for presentations given to students at the beginning of a foreign language course for which they are already enrolled:

I'd like to begin by congratulating you for enrolling in this foreign language course! But I also know some of you may be a little worried about the challenges of learning a new language, so my goal today is to help lessen those fears and help you build the confidence to enjoy the process as we progress through the semester!

RATIONALE:

In our increasingly global society, speaking multiple languages is a tremendous asset for young people as you enter the job market, or even just to socialize and collaborate with people from diverse populations.

But learning a foreign language could be an intimidating task, especially if that language uses a different writing system and tones and pronunciations than the language one currently speaks.

For example, this is the Tibetan alphabet:

ཀའམགས་ལྷན་ཅུ་ཆེན་ཉུང་མཉམ་སྤྱོད་
ཏུ་ཐད་སྒྲིན་པ་ཕམ་བསྒྲམ་མཚའ་ལྷོ་
མཁའ་ལྷན་པ་ལྷན་པ་ལྷན་པ་ལྷན་པ་ལྷན་པ་

Here is another example. This is the Cyrillic alphabet, used in over 50 languages, mainly in Russia, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe:

А Б В Г Д Е Ж З И І
К Л М Н О П Р С Т У Ф
Х Ц Ч Ш Щ Ъ Ы Ь Ї ІА
ІЄ Ю Ж ІЖ А ІА Ѕ Ψ Θ V Ç

And this is the Greek alphabet. Notice that it is *similar* to the Cyrillic alphabet but still has many distinct features:

Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν
Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω
α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν
ξ ο π ρ ς σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω

--cont.'d.--

Looking at all of those different letters, there's no doubt about it: It *could* be intimidating to think about not only learning how to *speak* a new language but also learning how to *write and read* using a whole new alphabet!

QUESTION: What are some of the worries *you* have about whether you can learn a new language, especially ones that use different writing systems?

A.) Possible answers include:

- It seems overwhelming to learn how to write and read a whole new alphabet system, and I don't think I can learn it fast enough to complete assignments and tests in class.
- I will embarrass myself by making pronunciation and vocabulary errors.
- I don't think it will be a useful skill to have.
 - **Tip:** The instructor may also offer additional examples of common fears that they have observed in students in the past.

All of those are common fears, and you should not be embarrassed to admit to them.

But think about it this way: Learning *anything new* is a challenge. Have you ever learned how to play a musical instrument? On the first day of class, did the music teacher plunk you down in front of a piano and expect you to play a Mozart concerto?

No! Your piano teacher broke the lessons down, starting with the basics and moving on to more complex lessons once you had built a strong foundation.

The same is true for *any* complex task, whether it's learning to play soccer or solving a mathematics equation. . . or even mastering a new video game!

And that's how foreign languages are taught, too: We break the language down into parts, and once you master the more basic tasks, you move on to the more complex tasks.

Learning a foreign language – even one with a different writing system than the one you already use – is a *process*, and it's not only one you *can* learn, it's one I think you would *enjoy* learning!

INTRODUCTION OF VIDEO:

We are now going to screen a short video that talks more about building confidence to learn a new language – and it does so with a fun introduction to the most commonly spoken language on the planet: Chinese.

The presenter will play the 7-minute Luminari video:

I Want to be an Ambassador! Build Confidence to Learn a New Language

<https://www.luminari.org/i-want-to-be-an-ambassador-online/>

(Note: Scroll down to locate and play this video.)

Q&A for after the video has been screened:

As we just saw in the **Luminari video**, people use language for enjoyment . . .enrichment . . . and advancement.

QUESTION: Can you name some ways that knowing how to speak other languages might be useful and enriching in *your* life?

A.) Possible answers include:

- It offers a competitive edge for work opportunities
- It is a way to communicate with relatives/friends who speak that language
- Knowing the foreign language is a way to enrich personal and business travel
- It's a way to engage in more cultural activities, such as enjoying international films, music, and other art forms.
- It's a way to understand other cultures, and collaborate to solve world problems.
- *Other...?*

SUPPORTING POINTS: In fact, *plenty* of evidence-based research shows that *all of those* are valid ways in which knowing another language can benefit a person!

Much of that research can be found at the website of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)¹.

Here are just a few ways that the evidence suggests language-learning can benefit you:

1. Language learning can support academic achievement in *other* subjects. Studies have shown that second-language learners:
 - Have improved test scores.
 - Students who learned a second language also showed improved performance in their *first* language in areas including reading comprehension, the mechanics of language, and in language expression.
2. Language learning provides cognitive benefits to students. Studies have shown that second-language learners:
 - Demonstrated the ability to think more creatively and divergently.
 - Showed significant differences in problem-solving abilities, compared to students who were *not* engaged in foreign-language instruction.
 - Significant differences were found in overall Performance IQ, compared to students who were *not* engaged in foreign-language instruction.

--Cont'd--

¹ <https://www.actfl.org/center-assessment-research-and-development/what-the-research-shows>

3. Language learning affects attitudes and beliefs about learning the target language *and* about other cultures. Studies have shown that second-language learners:
 - Develop a significantly more positive attitude about the speakers of that target language.
 - Perform better in their language learning when they have a positive attitude about their ability to learn the target language.

QUESTIONS: I'd like to answer any questions you have about what would be expected of you in our language-learning classes... and we can talk about any other worries you have that I may not have addressed yet.

The instructor will engage in Q&A as time permits.

CLOSE:

Thank you for your time today, and I hope to see you soon in one of our language-learning classes!

ALTERNATE CLOSE for presentations given to students at the beginning of a foreign language course for which they are already enrolled:

Thank you for your time today. I hope this has helped to lessen any worries you have as we dive into our curriculum and start learning a new language this semester!

ATTACHMENT

- PowerPoint visual aid to accompany talking points.

REFERENCES

Marques, Nuno. “The Alphabets And Writing Systems Of The World- Lesson Nine GmbH.” *Babbel Magazine*, www.babbel.com/en/magazine/what-are-the-alphabets-and-writing-systems-of-the-world .

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“World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. PDF.” ACTFL, www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/publications/standards/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf .

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