CALLING IN SICK

Proficiency Level: Intermediate

Lesson Length: 90 minutes

Vocabulary and Expressions: Reasons for missing work (e.g. the flu, a vet appointment, a car accident, a sick child)

Language/Culture Point: Cultural norms related to acceptable/unacceptable reasons for missing work

Objective: Students will be able to call in sick to work.

Materials: 1) Printed PPT slides: Calling in Sick, 2) Signal cards, 3) Real/toy cell phones, 4) Scenario cards: calling in sick (one set of cards per student)

Preparation: Lesson four requires the instructor to create additional scenarios for calling in sick to work, if necessary. Six scenarios are provided in step six.

STEP 1: ACTIVATE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	-	-

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Ask students, "Have you ever called in sick to work?" "Have your kids ever been too sick to go to school?" Ask students to share their stories.

2. Ask follow up questions, such as, "What did you say?" "What did your supervisor say?"

STEP 2: MINI-PRESENTATION WITH PROMPT

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
5 minutes	- Printed PPT Presentation	- Using pictures, predicting

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Go through the printed slide presentation about calling in sick to work.

2. Pause at times and have students predict what the supervisor will say. For example, the students could predict whether or not a supervisor will let an employee take the day off work because of a headache.

STEP 3: COMPREHENSION CHECK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Printed PPT Slides, signal cards	- Using pictures, true/false, signal cards

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Do a True/False activity with the students using signal cards. Ask questions about each person in the presentation and have students respond with true/false/I don't know.

STEP 4: HIGHLIGHT LESSON FOCUS AND MODEL TASK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
15 minutes	- Real/toy cell phones	- Authentic materials

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Tell students, "Sometimes you might feel too sick to go to work, or someone in your family might be too sick to go to work or school. Today we are going to practice calling in sick."

2. Direct students to the information on calling in sick in their books and have them fill in the missing information as you explain.

3. Highlight that calling in sick has 4 parts:
   a. A greeting:
   > Hello, this is ___ .

   b. An apology for calling in sick:
   > I'm sorry, I can't come in to work today.

   c. The reason for calling in:
   > I have the flu with a fever and chills.
   > I have a bad cold and I'm afraid it may be contagious.
   > I have a stomachache and I am too sick to leave home.

CALLING IN SICK

   d. When you will return to work:
> I will be at work tomorrow.
> I'm hoping to come back tomorrow if I feel better, but I'll call if I can't.

4. Take out a cell phone and say, "My child is very young. He has the flu. I cannot get a babysitter. What do I do?"

5. Model how to call in to work following the 4-step process.

6. Model the call a second time and outline a sample dialogue on the board as you go. Have students follow along in their book.

> For example:
> A (worker): (greeting)
> B (supervisor): Hi, ___ .
> A: (apology)
> B: Oh, that's too bad.
> A: (reason)
> B: I hope (you/he/she) feel(s) better.
> A: (when you will return to work)
> B: Okay, see you then. Thank you for calling.

STEP 5: GUIDED PRACTICE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Real/toy cell phones	- Authentic materials, role play, scenario cards

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Ask for a volunteer to come up and practice role playing with you. You will be the supervisor and they will be the employee.

2. Continue role playing with 2-3 more students.

3. As you role play the supervisor, rotate between acting understanding/sympathetic and acting stressed or unwilling to let the employee miss work.

4. As students become comfortable with the dialogue, take yourself out of the role play and let two students play the parts.

CALLING IN SICK

STEP 6: SMALL GROUP WORK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
20 minutes	- Real/toy cell phones, scenario cards: calling in sick (one set of cards for each student)	- Authentic materials, role play

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. If necessary, create scenario cards for calling in sick to work and school.

2. Have students get in pairs and take turns role playing the supervisor and employee until they have gone through all of the scenarios.

3. Assign one scenario to each pair and have them write their dialogue in the space provided in their book.

4. With any remaining time, allow pairs to demonstrate their dialogue to the class.

STEP 7: HIGHLIGHT HOW ENGLISH WORKS

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	-	- Graphic organizer

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Talk about the culture of working in the United States and contrast this with other countries, particularly those your students are from. Highlight the expectation that, in the United States, someone must be pretty ill not to go to work, while in other countries, a headache is reason enough to miss work.

2. Create a chart on the board with the names of the countries representing your students down the left side and common reasons for calling in sick across the top.

3. Go through each reason with the class and check off whether it's an acceptable excuse in each country. If students are all from the same country, do some research ahead of time into expected behavior in other countries and use those as examples.

4. Direct students to the list in their book. Go through the list with the students and have them mark Y or N if this excuse is acceptable in the United States.

5. Discuss their responses as a class.

STEP 8: QUICK CHECK AND REVIEW

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Signal cards	- Signal cards

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Dramatize different ways of calling in sick and have the students decide if the call was acceptable or not. Ask the students if the call had the right tone, if it was too short, or if the excuse was an acceptable one or not. Students should indicate Acceptable/Not acceptable/I'm not sure using their Signal Cards.