



BACK TO SCHOOL: TEACHER CONFERENCES

Lesson Length: 1.25 hours + Extension Activity

Vocabulary & Expressions: Vocabulary needed to talk about problems at school with your (children's) teacher

Language/Culture Point: Culture of schooling in the US

Objective: Students will be able to have a conversation regarding a problem they or their children are experiencing in school

Materials: Image from a parent/teacher conference, red/green/yellow Signal Cards



STEP 1: ACTIVATE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Picture from a parent/teacher conference	- Brainstorming - Think-Pair-Share - Predicting

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Show students a picture of parents talking to a teacher during a parent/teacher conference.
2. Do a Think-Pair-Share with the picture, asking students to predict what's going on in the photo alone, as a group, and then sharing their thoughts with the full class.
3. Tell students the picture is a photo of parents talking with their child's teacher in a parent/teacher conference. Clarify what a parent/teacher conference is for anyone who may be unsure.
4. As a full class or in groups, ask students if any of them have attended parent/teacher conferences in the United States and have them share their experiences. You might ask questions such as:
 - What happened?
 - What did they talk about?
 - Was it hard or intimidating?
 - Were they nervous?

Note: This lesson is meant for students who have children who are in school. If your



BACK TO SCHOOL: TEACHER CONFERENCES

students don't have school-aged children, the lesson can be adapted to discuss talking with a teacher in the adult ESL classroom rather than with children's teachers.

STEP 2: MINI-PRESENTATION WITH PROMPT

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes		

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Give a presentation to students about parent/teacher conferences in the US. For example:
 - Parent/Teacher conferences are meetings between parents and a child's teacher.
 - Parents talk with the teacher about their child.
 - They talk about problems and solutions.
 - Most conferences are 20 to 30 minutes long.
 - Most conferences are at the school.
2. Repeat the story a second time, highlighting key vocabulary.

If it's appropriate for the level of your students, add a reading component to the lesson by typing up a copy of your presentation. Once you've given the presentation orally a few times, pass out the text to share with students. Read it with them using echo reading and choral reading strategies. You can also break students up into groups to work with the text. For example, ask them to practice reading it to each other, have them write comprehension questions about the presentation, etc.

STEP 3: DISCUSSION AND COMPREHENSION CHECK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
5 minutes	- Red/green/yellow Signal Cards	- Signal Cards - True/False Quiz

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Do a true/false activity using Signal Cards. Make true and false statements about the presentation from the previous step and have students use Signal Cards to indicate True/False/I don't know.



BACK TO SCHOOL: TEACHER CONFERENCES

2. Go back through the presentation again to verify answers.

STEP 4: HIGHLIGHT LESSON FOCUS AND MODEL TASK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
15 minutes		- Brainstorming - Role Play

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Tell students there are a lot of problems you might discuss with a teacher in a parent/teacher conference.
2. Give students a list of one or two possible problems, such as:
 - My son won't do his homework.
 - How can I help my daughter with her homework?
 - My child gets stressed when she has a test.As a class, brainstorm additional problems.
3. Select one of the problems and ask students what some possible solutions might be. For example, if you selected the problem of the child who won't do his homework, some possible solutions might be to do his homework with him and make it fun time you spend together, or give him incentives for getting his work done. As students give you possible solutions to the problem, write them on the board.
4. Using the solutions on the board, write a short dialog between a teacher and a parent. For example:

Parent: Hello, Mrs. Carson.
Teacher: Hello, Mr. Smith.
Parent: I'm having a problem with my son. He won't do his homework.
Teacher: Try doing his homework with him at night.
Parent: Thank you, Mrs. Carson. I will try that.
Teacher: Call me if this doesn't work.



BACK TO SCHOOL: TEACHER CONFERENCES

STEP 5: GUIDED PRACTICE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
5 minutes		- Brainstorming - Role Play

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Repeat step 4 above with a new problem, asking a strong student to come up and model the conversation with you.

STEP 6: PAIR OR SMALL GROUP WORK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
20 minutes		- Brainstorming - Role Play

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Have students pair up and ask each group to work on another of the problems you wrote on the board. Ask students to first brainstorm possible solutions and then practice a conversation about the problem. Ask them to repeat the conversation so each student gets a chance to play the part of both the student and the teacher.
2. Have each group come up and share its role play for the rest of the class.
3. After each role play conversation, discuss them as a class. You may also want to give students a form where they can record the problem and solution for each of the role plays they observe as a way to further engage them and promote active listening.

STEP 7: HIGHLIGHT HOW ENGLISH WORKS

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes		- Think-Pair-Share

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Tell students that school systems are different from country to country.



BACK TO SCHOOL: TEACHER CONFERENCES

2. Have students break up into groups, and using Think-Pair-Share, discuss what schools do in their native countries. Do they have parent/teacher conferences? If so, are they different from those in the U.S.? If they don't have parent/teacher conferences, what do they do? Do parents talk with teachers about problems?
3. Have groups share with the class what they discussed in each of their groups. Use this as a jumping off point to talk about the cultural differences between schools in the U.S. and in other countries, and the relationships between teachers and parents.

STEP 8: QUICK CHECK AND REVIEW

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
5 minutes		- Exit Check

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. As each student leaves, pretend you are a parent and tell them you are having a problem with your child. Using the problems you brainstormed in class, share your child's problem and ask the student what you can do about it.



BACK TO SCHOOL: TEACHER CONFERENCES



EXTENSION ACTIVITY: PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
Varies	- Varies	- Varies

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Go online to the We Are New York website at:



<http://www.nyc.gov/html/weareny/html/home/home.shtml>.

2. Review the different materials for the episode “Welcome Parents” about parent/teacher conferences. Find materials appropriate for your students and write your own lesson using the English Forward lesson flow and the online materials.

For more advanced students, watch the episode “Welcome Parents” as a class and then discuss.