

THE KEYS to the Classroom

*A basic manual
to help new language teachers
find their way*

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Foreword

Why didn't anyone ever teach me about this in my methods course? If you're a new teacher, you may have asked yourself that question a dozen times. The answer is probably that there is so much to learn in a methods course that your professors most likely just couldn't fit it all in.

The truth is that surviving your first year(s) of teaching includes all the important things you learned in your teacher preparation program, plus a whole lot more—things you'll learn on the job from colleagues, from your school, and simply from trial and error.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has produced this handbook to help you avoid, as much as possible, the trials of the errors. In the pages that follow, you will find those exceedingly important tips that help you be as prepared as possible for opening day. You'll find ways of making it through those first challenging weeks when everything is new and you're establishing a sense of comfort and familiarity. And, as those weeks pass, you'll find yourself turning back to this guide as you prepare for Back-to-School Night, parent conferences, grading, and eventually those closing weeks of school. In just a few years, you'll be the one passing on the sage advice you'll find in this handbook, as you become the veteran expert helping to support the novice teachers in your school. But don't give the handbook away! You'll find yourself turning back to it time and again because of all the good ideas that can help a good teacher be a great one.

Teaching is hard work. But then, anything worth doing usually is. The rewards of teaching are endless, and the chance to make a difference in the lives of students, in the future of your local community, and in a global community far exceed the dollars you'll earn. Never forget that good teaching matters, and that the work you do matters more than ever.

All of us, members of ACTFL and veterans in the language teaching profession, are rooting for you. We hope that you meet extraordinary successes, quiet rewards, and students who every day remind you that they are what it's all about.

Good luck!

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To the beginning teachers who shared their fears, frustrations, creative ideas, and solutions; and to my colleagues who are dedicated to providing quality education to America's future.

Introduction

The teaching profession touches so many lives and teachers have such an impact on students that if asked to reflect on one's educational experience, most people would be able to cite a teacher who made a difference for them. Now you have the opportunity to be one of those teachers. As a beginning language teacher, proficient in your subject matter, but not necessarily well-versed in teaching methodology, you will be given a curriculum framework, basic rules and policies, some basic training, and a welcome to the field of teaching. You will also have lots of questions. Don't worry. We have lots of answers for you.

This handbook is designed to get new teachers ready—in short order—to tackle your first teaching assignment. You probably remember some of the savvy techniques your instructors in high school and college used to engage you in the learning process and excite you about learning languages. And we'll review the best of them in the chapters to come. You'll also find lots of tips for setting up your classroom, establishing your grading process, creating an exciting learning environment, and figuring out how to meet your school and district curriculum requirements. We've included many templates you can use as-is or modify and revise as you like. They will save you from reinventing the wheel in the process of establishing yourself as a teacher in your school.

A significant number of teachers—relative rookies as well as wise veterans, plus conference attendees and presenters, specialists, supervisors, and school administrators—contributed to the content of this handbook. You can benefit from their countless hours of classroom teaching, observations, debriefing sessions, teacher workshops, collaboration opportunities, and interventions over many years. We hope this handbook will give you a quick start in getting your classroom teaching career up and running.

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Chapter 1 | The First Week



Preparing for the first week of school

You have the first day of school circled in red on your calendar. This is a day you have been anticipating, and it is rushing toward you. Are you ready to greet a classroom full of anxious students, waiting for you to guide them in a new learning experience? It is normal to be a bit nervous at this point. But know this: Having read this handbook, you'll know the basic classroom drill. You will have your introductions and explanations down pat. You'll be able to put your students at ease. And before you know it, that first day will be a memory.

The purpose of this handbook is to get you ready in short order to tackle your teaching assignment. You probably remember some of the savvy techniques your instructors in high school and college used to make you excited about learning. We'll review the best of them in the chapters to come. You'll find tips for setting up your classroom, establishing your grading process, creating an effective learning environment, and figuring out how to meet your school and district curriculum requirements. You'll find lots of templates you can use as is or modify and revise as you like. They will save you from re-inventing the wheel in the process of teaching your students a new language.

So let's get started!

Your Letter to Parents

Before you get caught up in the tasks of setting up the classroom, listing student names in your grade book and setting up a bulletin board, take time to write your introductory letter to the parents of your students. It is just as important as the first impression you make at Back-to-School Night. Parents want to know from the start the answers to important questions, such as:

- Is this teacher positive and enthusiastic about teaching?
- Will he or she be fair to my child?
- What are the expectations for my child?
- How can my child be successful in this class?
- How can I help my child be successful?
- How can I keep up with my child's progress?
- What weight will each classroom component have on the final grade?
- How will the final grade be computed?

In your Letter to Parents, answer all these questions in your own words. Keep it brief, but cogent. And when you distribute your letter to students at the end of your first day emphasize that students should present these letters to their parents as soon as they return home.

Before printing out copies of your letter, ask a member of your department to proof it for you. Ask an administrator to review the letter if required to do so by your school district. It's important to make a good first impression with a well-written letter free of any errors. You do not want parents to see any spelling or grammatical errors because they will think: 1) you do not know how to write English correctly, 2) you will be careless in grading their child's work, and 3) you do not take pride in your work.

In your letter, give parents a phone number and an e-mail address where they may contact you at work. An open line of communication gives parents a secure feeling that you share the mission of helping their child succeed. Make your letter as inviting and helpful as possible, and send it home the first

day of school. Parents especially look forward to reading the information students bring home after their first day. Have parents sign and return the bottom part of the letter indicating how they prefer to be contacted during the school year.

Note: Parents are sometimes confused when they get letters from five or six different teachers each indicating slightly different procedures. A suggestion here would be to use e-mail as an alternative, especially for middle and high school parents. It's possible to ask the students to request that their parents send you an e-mail indicating how they would prefer to be contacted. If a teacher does not hear from a parent, the teacher knows that a follow up is needed to initiate contact. Teachers can make this the assignment, keep track of the e-mails, create class lists, and send the initial letter electronically. Many schools are restricting paper and encouraging e-mail. Many parents prefer this type of contact since letters do not arrive home. It is important to know if all parents have access to computers. If not, you can tell the parent that you will be sending home information on certain days.

Writing a Syllabus

In some districts, the syllabus for a course is already written. If this is the case in your district, make sure you copy the syllabus and distribute it to your students and parents in accordance to your district policy. If this is not the case, and the expectation is for you to write a syllabus, then ask colleagues for samples of syllabi to read. Even though you may have received numerous syllabi in your courses at college, composing one for students in "your" course may make you nervous initially. Not to worry. A well-written syllabus indicates that you have spent time planning the course and want each student to be prepared for your instruction.

The following items should be included if applicable in your district:

- Course title and course code.
- Credit upon completion.
- Classroom number
- Information on how to get in touch with the instructor.
- Titles of textbook, workbook, supplementary readings.
- Materials needed, such as supplies, dictionaries.
- Course description, with goals and objectives.
- Content to be covered by quarter, semester, or year.

- Policies and/or rules regarding tardies, attendance, cheating, grading, class participation, missed assignments.
- Available sources of support.

Grading System

One of the most difficult changes students face when transitioning from elementary school to middle and high school is having a different teacher, and classroom, for each subject they are enrolled in. In each teacher's class, they may face a new set of rules, different grading system and classroom procedures. To help your students, post your grading policy for all to see at any time. It is also important to include your grading policy in the letter home to parents and in your syllabus. Students and parents alike will appreciate being able to refer to your letter during the year to review your system. The following points will help you to be consistent and clear about how you intend to grade your students' progress:

- Decide from the beginning if you will be using points or percentages. Switching between the two systems is very confusing for students and for parents.
- If you use percentages, decide before school starts if you are going to round up with a .5 or not. Be sure to consult your school or district's policy manual as there may be guidelines for this process.
- Make sure students understand how each marking period will be calculated, along with the final exam, to come up with the final grade for the year.
- Explain to students how much weight each category will have. A percentage on a daily activity and a test will affect the average for the marking period differently.
- Give students a quick example of all the grades that could go into a marking period. Have them make the computations. This exercise will impress upon them the weight of different categories and you will see students putting forth more effort in the areas with more weight.
- If you use a rubric for arriving at performance assessments or projects, give students a copy of it before the assessment or assignment is given. Students should be informed about the criteria for grading before, not after, the project is completed. Remember: students will give you what you ask for. If you did not make your criteria for grading clear, you will not get a quality project in return. Students perform best when they have been given clear expectations and directions and are not left to guess what the teacher wants each student to do.

- Post the school district's policy for what constitutes an A, B, C, D, and F. It may seem clear to you, but some students may have transferred to your school from another district and they may be unfamiliar with the cut-off percentages.

Classroom Rules

I know teachers like to have rules posted for all students to see and often it is a school policy. Keep in mind that the bottom line for classroom management is to make every minute count. When students are engaged in the lesson and not bored, classroom management issues are less likely to occur. If you are required to post your rules or prefer to do so, keep a positive classroom atmosphere. It is easy to write your classroom rules with "Do not ____ or ____ NOT allowed." Rules are much more effective if presented in a positive manner, such as "Be respectful and considerate of others" and "Come prepared to learn." Avoid the word NOT. Limit your list to about five basic rules. A lengthy list is overwhelming and students may feel they can do nothing right.

- List only rules you know you will enforce. If you are inconsistent in enforcing your rules, students will learn quickly that it's not important to follow them.
- Plan your consequences before school starts and not in the middle of an infraction.
- Discuss your rules with your school's administrators and make sure they will support you, before you ever send a student to the office for breaking a rule.
- Some teachers even involve the students in the development of the class rules and therefore have more ownership from the students in the management of the class.
- Students also find it interesting to investigate school or classroom rules in target language schools. This is a great way to involve them in the rule-setting process in an authentic way.

Seating Arrangements

Since communication is a key component of foreign language learning, your seating arrangement should facilitate interaction. Think of ways you can group students and still have the desks conducive to testing. Some teachers arrange their desks in rows because they want to minimize talking at inappropriate times and limit cheating. Straight rows will accomplish this goal, but if you want students to practice with a partner, students will be twisting in their seats while trying to engage their partner. Also, it's easy for students to disengage while talking to the back of their classmates' heads.

Instead of inhibiting productive conversation, rethink how you can keep students on task and involved in the lesson. For example, this can be accomplished by changing activities often and giving students more opportunities to use language in problem-solving. Try changing the seating arrangement each marking period. You can also tell students it is a privilege to sit next to their friends and if they talk at inappropriate times they will lose that seating privilege. Once you have established order in the class, arrange your students' desks in one of the following arrangements:

- Horseshoe: In this arrangement, students are able to see the faces of most of the students in the class and can start conversations easily when asked to do so.
- Tables: In a table formation, you can get groups of 4 to 6 to work together and discuss a topic or break into sub groups. For testing purposes you may want to consider coversheets or science project boards to set up mock cubicles.
- Paired grouping: Students are already paired with a partner. This is ideal for partner drills throughout the lesson.
- Half and half: Have half the class facing the other half. Students are able to look at half the class when asking and answering questions and will also be able to work on partner drills with the person next to them.

The Traveling Teacher

What if you find yourself traveling from room to room, without a permanent base? Before school begins, work out a system with the teachers who also use the classroom. Ask if you can have a bookcase, table, portion of the bulletin board or wall space, drawer of a file cabinet, shelf of a wardrobe, drop boxes, and/or file folder stand.

If this is not possible, you may want to locate a very tall mobile cart. It can become your mobile desk. It will need a place to store handouts, textbooks, workbooks, homework, chalk, whiteboard markers, transparencies and overhead markers, extra paper and pencils, and the like. There are traveling teachers who post their classroom rules to their cart, and students regard the cart as a place to deposit homework, pick up worksheets, and even get a pencil if they have forgotten to bring one. If you have a cart, you'll always have your handouts with you.

Bulletin Boards/Classroom Décor

There are two camps when it comes to bulletin boards: teachers that love decorating them and those who lack the creative

confidence to design a unique bulletin board that will also function as an additional instructional resource for students. If you love designing and changing a bulletin board display often, you can probably skip this section, because you will find a way to squeeze in the time to do so. For those of you who find yourself staring at a rather large bulletin board in your classroom and wondering what on earth you can do with it, here are some suggestions:

- Ask a teacher who enjoys creating bulletin boards for ideas.
- Display material by marking period, semester, or entire year.
- Address thematic units in more than one level and/or language (if you have more than one preparation). You could list all the themes you will cover for that year by level and/or language (especially if you teach more than one level or language).
- Post items that catch students' attention and are informative.
- Post student work. This is a great way to make use of bulletin board space while featuring the creative work of your students.
- Make your board a low maintenance tool.

Bulletin board content ideas:

- Create a collage of everyday material such as food and drink labels, advertisements, coasters, candy wrappers, empty food containers, CD covers, newspaper headlines, magazine covers, and souvenirs brought in by students as evidence of products made or consumed in a particular country, plus notices of current events and foreign cultural information. You could build a bulletin board you would never have to change for the entire year.
- Build a bulletin board of classroom commands/expressions with pictures attached. This will remind all students to stay in the target language no matter what the level of instruction that is being taught. They will take risks and start using the expressions in their writings. Put sentences, commands and questions on the bulletin board in the target language—such as “Open your book to page 57.” “I forgot my pencil.” “The early bird gets the worm.” “I can do this!” Then even level 1 students will be able to practice using the target language instead of reverting back to English.
- Develop a timeline for the year on the bulletin board, showing students where they are going at a particular level and let them mark their progress as they go. Teachers can draw lines from the timeline to samples of student work along the way. Be careful not to show a student's name along with a grade if you post student samples, because student grades are always private information.

- Create a bulletin board of pictures from countries that speak the target language. Some of the best pictures can be found in large wall calendars. Take the calendar apart, cut out the pictures, laminate them and staple them onto your bulletin board. Note: Teachers need to pay attention to copyright laws when using copyrighted materials.
- Turn the bulletin board into a smorgasbord of newspaper articles in the target language. Every Friday ask five students to bring in an article in the target language from newspaper websites you have approved. Have them present it briefly for a minute or two, then post the article on the bulletin board. In lower level classes, students can find cognates and guess what the article is saying. If you do not have upper-level students, then perhaps the language honor society students can bring articles by the classroom for service credit. At the end of the year, not only will students find they can understand more than they did at the beginning of the year, but they can also look over the world events that took place that school year.

Equipment

Before the first day of school, check the equipment that is in your classroom(s). Make sure the overhead projector has a working light bulb, the VCR and/or DVD player work, the maps pull down, the markers for the white boards have ink, and you have enough transparencies and overhead markers. Check your computer, LCD projector, CD/cassette recorder, and if you have a Smartboard, make sure you know how it works. There is nothing worse than to start a class session and find out that your equipment doesn't work. Make a list of people you need to contact (when and where) for repairs and supplies. High- and low-tech breakdowns make for disrupted teaching days.

Technology

Technology can be your friend or, at times, your worst enemy. Well ahead of opening day, ask at your school what technology you will have access to for finalizing grades, contacting parents, accessing student information, posting homework on websites, creating lessons, filing lessons, researching facts, using programs that enhance instruction, assessing students, and so forth.

This is extremely important advice. Once school starts, it is hard to find time to learn about and practice with the tech-

nology available at your school. Around the mid-year point, you will hear the horror stories about new teachers who have only then discovered that their lives could have been so much easier if they had known about this or that piece of technology. For example, late in the year one teacher finally discovered she could e-mail grades right from her school's grading program to parents' e-mail accounts on a regular basis. To her chagrin, she had been sending grades one by one to parents who wanted updates. Fortunately, a colleague told her there was an easier way.

Find out early if your school's teachers have access to a course management system, like Blackboard.com. Ask if you can get help in developing a website where you can post homework assignments and e-mail homework to students who are sick. Find out if there are free sites for teachers to use where teachers can post homework for parents and students to check on a daily basis.

There are also helpful websites where teachers can get tips and teaching freebies, such as clip art, puzzles, and games. There is a wealth of information on teacher websites. Run searches on your PC to see what resources are available. Bookmark sites that are most beneficial. Also bookmark websites of other local, regional, and national professional organizations that can assist you in your career. The benefits of becoming a member of professional organizations will be discussed later in this handbook.

Emergency Lesson Plans

Admit it—teachers are not super heroes, even if their deeds entitle them to that status. You can get sick. Your car can break down on the way to work. Unanticipated events that will keep you out of your classroom happen. So you need to plan for them. Before the school year begins, develop a lesson plan that can cover three days and is not tied to any particular unit. This may sound challenging, but it really isn't all that difficult and it will save you from having to write lesson plans at 2:00 a.m. because you can't be at school that day. The objective is to allow students to continue to learn in the teacher's absence. Don't design an emergency lesson plan just to keep the students busy, make sure there is an important instructional objective. Make your plan meaningful and easy for a substitute teacher to deliver. If you teach two or more levels, try to develop emergency lesson plans that can be used in all of your classes. The following are suggestions for lessons

that can cover up to three days and also be taught by a non-speaker of the language you teach, as many foreign language teachers will not always have access to substitutes who speak the target language.

- Geography lesson: Students can always benefit from a short lesson or refresher lesson on geography and map reading in the country of the target language. Students can also investigate a particular city or region.
- Culture lesson: Upper-level students can create cultural activities for lower-level students, and lower-level students can investigate and write what they have learned on particular cultural topics.
- Children's book: Students may enjoy writing a children's book in the target language, with illustrations. Even level 1 students can write a short story with greetings, numbers, common phrases, and the like. They may be impressed that they can actually produce something in a foreign language and read it aloud to a small group. The illustrations will add some fun to the project. If the substitute can get access to a computer lab, the students may be able to use pictures and creative fonts to give their book a polished look.
- Puppet show: Students can create simple puppets and in small groups write a script for a puppet show. Students learn a great deal from peer editing. For a level 1 class, the teacher may want to provide sample phrases from which the students can select what they need. The teacher may want to pre-record phrases in the script on tape so the class can practice pronunciations.
- Famous people project: Have biographies on 10 or 15 well-known people from the target language country. Ask each student to select a person and read about him or her, then write an essay as if he or she were that person and present it verbally to the class in the target language. In a lower-level class where the students may not be able to do this, an alternative would be to ask the students to research their subject person and present profiles of them in English.
- Video: Have a video approved and ready to show to your classes. Make sure it is age appropriate and can be linked to instruction. Develop worksheets for a pre-lesson (containing vocabulary and general information that is useful for the video) as well as post-video worksheets that will provoke discussion. It is also a good idea to have students write a reflection paragraph or essay so that they can digest what they have just viewed and link it to the language, culture, and unit that has just been taught or will be taught.

- Textbook challenge: Don't assume students know where to find information in their textbooks concerning vocabulary, rules, usage, and the like. They have to be taught where how and where to find specific information in their primary resource—the textbook. So create a “Textbook Challenge” activity, with rewards, for students to do while you are away. This can be done at any level as long as the students use a textbook as a resource. For example, ask students to find certain vocabulary words, identify which chapter they are introduced in, if the word has two or more meanings, how the word is used in a sentence, and so forth.
- How much material are you able to cover in the first marking period?
- Does the department use common assessments, performance assessments, or departmental exams? Could I get copies before I start planning?
- Do we have common planning time?
- Does the department share materials? Are they located in a central location?
- Do we have access to computers or a computer lab? Do we have to sign up for time?

Student Names

Or have students find grammar points from the index and write down the page numbers where they can be found. Also ask students to locate cultural topics in the table of contents and to describe how a chapter is set up—how the theme is divided, how vocabulary is introduced, how the grammar is introduced, and whether there are partner drills and writing drills. This activity will teach students how to use the textbook as a resource throughout the year and beyond. Substitutes can also participate in this exercise and help students with the questions.

Colleagues: A Valuable Resource

Before school starts, take the time to get to know colleagues, especially experienced teachers, who teach the same or similar courses that you are about to teach. You'll find that they usually will be happy to share information that that you may find crucial for planning and pacing your first month on the job. Ask questions that will help you with immediate issues. Avoid being drawn into long conversations about issues that do not concern you or your course. To stay on topic, have your questions written down. Ask for specific information you'll need to create your syllabus, your letter to parents, and your lessons for the first weeks. Some suggested questions:

- Are there departmental policies on grading, class participation, homework, cheating, classroom rules that I need to know about so I can develop my policies?
- Did you integrate last year's material (level 2 class or above) throughout your lessons this year?
- How many grades do you average a week and per marking period?
- What type of assessments do you use?
- What materials do you use to supplement the textbook?
- Where can I find a copy of the curriculum guide?

One of your major challenges the first month of school is learning approximately 150 student names and faces. Finding a method that works for you requires some experimentation. Some foreign language teachers ask students to pick a name common to the target language—but this can create more stress during the first month of school because the names have now doubled to 300! Here are some methods experienced teachers use:

- On your seating chart, place students in alphabetical order by first name instead of last name. Proponents of this method say it is easier to remember the first name this way.
- Ask students what their favorite activity is and then group them by activity. If you have students with the same name, this helps you identify which one you are looking for. Also, you probably will remember what a student's favorite activity grouping is. This can be helpful when you want to inquire about their interests. Your students will be impressed that you remember what they like to do.
- Have students decorate table tent cards bearing their names and keep them in place for at least the first month. Let students decorate their tent cards in ways that demonstrate their special interests. That can also elicit dialogue in class.
- Place your seating chart where you can see it, but it is not visible to students.
- Play a name game as a warm-up at the start of each class period for the first week of school.

First Week's Lessons

The first week is always interesting. Teachers who develop lessons for the full class period find they sometimes run out of time. Be sure you know what all of your responsibilities will be in your first week before writing lesson plans for that week. In the first few days of school, many schools have teachers

distribute and collect important documents and go over fire drill information, student responsibilities and rights, supplies needed, the course syllabus, and classroom rules. Be prepared for contingencies and interruptions this week. This is a good time for review and use of the target language to get to know your students. Following are suggested activities for the first week:

Level 1

- Alphabet, phonetics, tones, character strokes
- Greetings and introductions
- Names common to the target language
- Cognates, if applicable
- Culture

Level 2

- Student introductions
- Student discussions on family, leisure time activities, likes and dislikes
- “All about me” posters (each student makes a poster describing key physical and social characteristics)
- Review of themes and topics from level 1 integrated in activities as a review, while teaching new material

Level 3

- Review of level 2 themes and topics
- Detailed student introductions
- Discussion of summer activities or travel
- Discussion on current events
- Movie and/or book critiques
- Describing pictures (to get students to use adjectives)

Upper Level

- Activities involving assigned summer reading
- Discussion on current events
- Movie and/or book critiques
- Discussion and reflection regarding student responsibilities and suggestions for changes in school policies
- Comparison of environmental policies between U.S. and target language country

Dress for Success

Many young teachers may be inclined to identify with the students they teach. After all, they are relatively close in age to students, especially those in upper-level classes. You must keep in mind, however, that you are a professional in charge of many students in a classroom. You must firmly establish that role in every way. And your work attire is a major factor in defining roles of teachers and students. If you come to work in casual clothing, such as jeans and a t-shirt, you are sure to look like most of your students, and it will be hard for students to regard you as an authority figure.

Some school districts have a dress policy for teachers, but if there is no policy, you must think carefully about what your physical appearance is telling students in the class. The message should be, “I am in charge.” If your school has a “dress down Friday,” ask more experienced teachers for dress code tips before showing up in shorts and a tank top. Here are a couple of tips for dressing for success:

- Definitely dress your best for parent conferences, Back-to-School Night, and award presentations. This sends a message to parents that the teacher is a professional and expects to be treated as one.
- Wear slacks, tucked-in shirts, skirts and/or dresses, appropriate shoes, and socks or stockings. (Ties for men are required in some schools). It is best to ask your administrator.
- Definitely avoid beach wear, including flip flops, short skirts, tank tops showing underwear, midriff, cleavage, jeans with holes and tears, and see-through clothing.
- Some schools have spirit days to support an activity or sporting event. Ask veteran teachers what is allowed by the administration before coming to school in inappropriate attire.
- Holiday attire and/or costumes may be permitted by some school districts, but banned by others, especially if the clothing has religious overtones. It is always best to ask first.



Am I Ready?

- I have prepared my **letter to parents**.
 - I have asked a member of my department to proof the letter/email.
 - The letter/e-mail has been approved by the appropriate administrator.
- I have copied the district's syllabus or
- I have prepared a **course syllabus** that includes:
 - Course title and course code.
 - Credit upon completion.
 - Classroom number
 - Information on how to get in touch with the instructor.
 - Titles of textbook, workbook, and supplementary readings.
 - Materials needed, such as supplies and dictionaries.
 - Course description, with goals and objectives.
 - Content to be covered by quarter, semester, or year.
 - Policies and/or rules regarding tardies, attendance, cheating, grading, class participation, and missed assignments.
 - Available sources of support.
- I have explained the following points of my **grading policy** to parents and students in writing:
 - I have explained that I calculate points/percentages for each grade.
 - I have clearly stated that I will/will not round up grades.
 - I have explained how each marking period and final year grade will be calculated.
 - I have explained how much weight each category will have.
 - I have included a copy of the rubric(s) I use for assessing student work.
 - I have included the school district's policy for what constitutes: A, B, C, D, & F.
- I have developed my essential **classroom rules**.
 - I have developed positive rules and limited the number of rules to only those that are essential.
- I have well-developed lessons that will keep my students engaged the entire period.
- I have paced my lessons appropriately and have a back-up plan for any remaining time in a period, in order to limit classroom management issues.
- I have developed a **seating arrangement** that will encourage communication and collaboration.
- Since I am **not in one classroom** for all my classes, I have developed a system to help me stay organized while I travel.
 - I have worked out a system with the teacher who also uses the classroom.
 - I have a bookcase, table, section of the bulletin board or wall space, drawer of a file cabinet, shelf of a wardrobe, drop boxes and/or file folder stand to store my materials.
 - I have a traveling cart with room for all my materials for each class.

- I have decorated my **bulletin board(s)** so that students will feel welcomed and enthusiastic about learning the target language.
- I have checked all **equipment** to make sure everything is operational, and I know how to operate each piece of equipment.
- I have registered for **technology** training so that I am current on the technology required/recommended for my teaching position.
- I have developed three days of **emergency lesson plans**.
 - My lessons can either be used for any class or are marked for the specific level.
 - My lessons are written so that a substitute can follow them, even if he or she does not speak the language.
 - I have provided materials and copies of handouts for the lessons and they are marked appropriately.
 - My lessons allow students to continue to learn in my absence.
- I have collaborated with colleagues and feel I have my immediate questions answered.
- I have developed a system for being able to call students by name, even on the first day.
- I have planned the first week's lessons so that students feel they are learning something new and exciting from the first day on.
- I have selected clothing that is appropriate for my professional position.

Reflection

What aspect of starting the school year worked well?

What would I change for next year?

How would I change it?

What additional resources do I need to gather for next year?

Template A

Sample Letter to Parents (modern language)

High
School

Mountain View High School

5345 Tiger Trail
Pleasant Town, USA*Home of the Mountain View Tigers*

[date]

I am pleased to have your son/daughter in my **German 1** class. I plan to make his/her year of studying a foreign language an exciting and memorable experience.

Foreign language study is essential today not only to meet the requirements of higher education institutions, but also because of the expanding global economy and ever increasing job opportunities requiring one or more languages other than English. Rapid expansion of international business creates a need for more knowledge of international cultures as well as proficiency in foreign languages. In order to prepare our future leaders to be competitive, students must develop communicative competence in languages.

Emphasis will be placed on communicating effectively in **German**, making connections, comparing **German** with the English language, examining communities, and understanding the cultures of the **German**-speaking countries. At the beginning of each marking period, I will send home objectives for the nine weeks. If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to contact me at [phone number] or e-mail me at faye.fantastic@mountainview.edu.

In order to strengthen your child's organizational skills, I will be issuing each student a Mountain View Planner, in which he or she is to write assignments and quizzes/tests/projects at the beginning of each week. Please check your child's planner regularly to be informed of the daily activities. Homework assignments will be kept to an average of 15-20 minutes per day. Each student will be responsible for maintaining a log of his or her grades. I will issue each student an interim report. This computer printout of all grades to date can be requested at any time as a progress report.

Student grades are based on a point system. Each grade the student receives (quiz, test, oral presentation, project, class participation, etc.) will be worth a certain number of points based on a 100-point scale. Quarter and final grades will be based on the school district's grading scale which is as follows:

94 - 100	A
87 - 93	B
80 - 86	C
70 - 79	D
Below 70	F

At the end of the marking period, the total number of points earned will be divided by the total number of points possible. Each grade has the following weight for the quarter grade:

Tests	30%
Quizzes	20%
Projects	25%
Homework	15%
Class Participation	10%

Students do not receive grades lower than 50% unless the student refuses to complete the assignment or is caught cheating. The final grade for the year is an average of the four quarter grades and the final exam.

I expect this to be an exciting and fulfilling year in your child's foreign language experience and I am looking forward to meeting you at Back-to-School Night on [date].

Sincerely,

Faye Fantastic
German Instructor

Template B

Sample Letter to Parents (Latin)

High
School

Mountain View High School

5345 Tiger Trail
Pleasant Town, USA*Home of the Mountain View Tigers*

[date]

Dear Parents,

I am pleased to have your son/daughter in my **Latin 1** class. I plan to make his/her year of studying a foreign language an exciting and memorable experience.

Foreign language study is essential today not only to meet the requirements of higher education institutions, but also because of the expanding global economy and ever increasing job opportunities domestically requiring one or more languages other than English. Students will benefit from learning **Latin** no matter what academic or career path they pursue.

The relationship of English to **Latin** is emphasized in vocabulary building, word derivation, and meanings of prefixes and suffixes. Language structures and syntax are developed through the study of literary passages. At the beginning of each marking period, I will send home objectives for the nine weeks. If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to contact me at [phone number] or e-mail me at faye.fantastic@mountainview.edu.

In order to strengthen your child's organizational skills, I will be issuing each student a Mountain View Planner, in which he or she is to write assignments and quizzes/tests/projects at the beginning of each week. Please check your child's planner regularly to be informed of the daily activities. Homework assignments will be kept to an average of 15-20 minutes per day. Each student will be responsible for maintaining a log of his or her grades. I will issue each student an interim report. This computer printout of all grades to date can be requested at any time as a progress report.

Student grades are based on a point system. Each grade the student receives (quiz, test, oral presentation, project, class participation, etc.) will be worth a certain number of points based on a 100-point scale. Quarter and final grades will be based on the school district's grading scale which is as follows:

94 - 100	A
87 - 93	B
80 - 86	C
70 - 79	D
Below 70	F

At the end of the marking period, the total number of points earned will be divided by the total number of points possible. Each grade has the following weight for the quarter grade:

Tests	30%
Quizzes	20%
Projects	25%
Homework	15%
Class Participation	10%

Students do not receive grades lower than 50% unless the student refuses to complete the assignment or is caught cheating. The final grade for the year is an average of the four quarter grades and the final exam.

I expect this to be an exciting and fulfilling year in your child's foreign language experience and I am looking forward to meeting you at Back-to-School Night on [date].

Sincerely,

Faye Fantastic

Template C

Sample Letter to New Student in Class

High
School

Mountain View High School

5345 Tiger Trail
Pleasant Town, USA

Home of the Mountain View Tigers

[date]

Dear Steven,

It is so nice having you in my **French 1** class! I know it is hard joining a class after the start of school because you have missed the teachers' introductions to the courses and their policies and rules. In order to make things a little easier for you, I have outlined my policies and procedures in this letter. Please feel free to ask me questions anytime—my door is always open.

- **Grading:** Student grades are based on a point system. Each grade the student receives (quiz, test, oral presentation, project, class participation, etc.) will be worth a certain number of points as determined by the teacher. At the end of the marking period, the total number of points earned will be divided by the total number of points possible. Each grade has the following weight for the quarter grade:

Tests	30%
Quizzes	20%
Projects	25%
Homework	15%
Class Participation	10%

Students do not receive grades lower than 50% unless the student refuses to complete the assignment or is caught cheating. The final grade for the year is an average of the four quarter grades and the final exam.

- **Class Participation:** Class participation in the target language is a key component in practicing your communicative skills, which are essential in language proficiency. Participation involves more than just raising your hand. Students have to be attentive, participate in partner activities, speak the target language formally and informally, and come to class prepared. If your teacher agrees that you exceed expectations in this area, you will be able to drop your lowest quiz grade at the end of the quarter. These self-assessments will be conducted weekly in order to keep you focused on your progress in this area.
- **Materials:** You will need to come to class each day with a three-ring binder and five dividers. Label each divider 1) Vocabulary Activities, 2) Journal, 3) Reading Selections, 4) Listening Activities, 5) Homework. Please have a calendar/assignment book, pen or pencil, and plenty of paper with you daily.
- **Homework:** It is necessary to practice **French** daily in order to build a solid foundation for future lessons. In order to accomplish this objective, homework will be assigned at the end of each class period. I will post the weekly assignments, quizzes and tests on the board in front of the class, and on my website. It will be your responsibility to record the assignments in your assignment book. If you have been absent, you will know the assignment that has been missed.
- **Extra help:** I am available after school on Mondays and Wednesdays in my room. Please schedule to stay after school with me if you feel you need extra help. It is better to ask for extra help as soon as there is confusion. We also have honor society students willing to help tutor, if you prefer a peer tutor.

Sincerely,

Mme Merveilleuse

Template D

Sample Syllabus

High
School

Syllabus for Arabic 1

Course code: 501000

Prerequisite: None

Textbook: *Iqra*. International Educational Foundation. 2003.

Materials needed: Students will need to bring to class a three-ring binder, pen and/or pencil, highlighter, dictionary, and journal.

Course Description

Students develop the ability to communicate about themselves and their immediate environment using simple sentences containing basic language structures. This communication is evidenced in all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing—with emphasis on the ability to communicate orally and in writing. Students begin to explore and study the themes of Personal and Family Life, School Life, Social Life, and Community Life.

Goals: This course's primary goals are to:

- **Communicate in Arabic**
Students function in a variety of practical settings using listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as well as knowledge of the target culture(s).
- **Understand other cultures**
Students demonstrate an understanding of traditions, customs, beliefs, and cultural contributions and how these elements relate to language.
- **Connect with other disciplines and acquire information**
Students connect information about the language and cultures they are learning with concepts studied in other subject areas.
- **Develop insight into their own language and culture**
Through study of language and culture, students recognize, compare, and contrast language concepts as well as cultural perspectives, practices, and products.
- **Participate in the global community**
Students use the foreign language to communicate with speakers of that language, both at home and around the world, to improve their own communication skills and to enhance their view of themselves as citizens of the world.

Content to be covered in the first quarter:

Introductory Unit:

Alphabet & Phonetics

Classroom Expressions

Theme: Personal and Family Life

Greeting and Introductions

Physical Descriptions

Family Members

Assessments: Students will be assessed formally and informally through a variety of means to include quizzes, tests, and projects. These assessments will measure language learning in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. The district has developed and uses the performance assessment as a tool to measure language progress. Performance assessments are conducted routinely throughout the year and are rated using rubrics developed by foreign language teachers. The end-of-year performance assessment counts as 50% of the final exam grade.

Tardies: After two tardies, I will notify parents and assign the student an after-school detention.

Homework: It is necessary to practice Arabic daily in order to build a solid foundation for future lessons. In order to accomplish this objective, homework will be assigned at the end of each class period. I will post the weekly assignments, quizzes, and tests on the board in front of the class, and on my website. It will be your responsibility to record the assignments in your assignment book. If you have been absent, you will know the assignment that has been missed.

Class Participation: Class participation in the target language is a key component in practicing your communicative skills, which are essential in language proficiency. Participation involves more than just raising your hand. Students have to be attentive, participate in partner activities, speak the target language formally and informally, and come to class prepared. If your teacher agrees that you exceed expectations in this area, you will be able to drop your lowest quiz grade at the end of the quarter. These self-assessments will be conducted weekly in order to keep you focused on your progress in this area.

Grading: Student grades are based on a point system. Each grade the student receives (quiz, test, oral presentation, project, class participation, etc.) will be worth a certain number of points as determined by the teacher. At the end of the marking period, the total number of points earned will be divided by the total number of points possible. Each grade has the following weight for the quarter grade.

Tests	30%
Quizzes	20%
Projects	25%
Homework	15%
Class Participation	10%

Extra help: I am available after school on Mondays and Wednesdays in my room. Please schedule to stay after school with me if you feel you need extra help. It is better to ask for extra help as soon as there is confusion. We also have honor society students willing to help tutor, if you prefer a peer tutor.

Template E | Classroom Rules

K-8

Classroom Rules and Procedures

Sensational Sensei Japanese 1

1

Respect your fellow classmates, your teacher, and the contents of the classroom at all times.

2

Come prepared to learn by bringing your textbook, workbook, notebook, and pen/pencil.

3

Food and gum interfere with oral communication. Please leave these items in your backpack or locker.

4

Ask for clarification the minute you are confused. There are no dumb questions.

5

Communication is the focus of this class, but not on cell phones. Leave them in your locker/at home.

Template F | Student Responsibility

High
School

What Is Student Responsibility?

1. The state, quality, or fact of being responsible.
2. Something for which one is responsible; a duty, obligation, or burden.

<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=responsibility>

What Is Cheating?

- The following constitutes cheating in my class:
 - a. Giving or receiving information on assessments.
 - b. Using any type of unapproved aide during formal or informal assessments (electronic devices, cheat sheets, etc).
 - c. Copying software.
 - d. Copying information from another student's tests, quizzes, homework, and projects.
 - e. Discussing content material with students who have not yet taken an assessment.
 - f. Parental help beyond that of assistance.
 - g. Talking during an assessment.
 - h. Plagiarism: Copying the essential character of another's work, whether visual or written, and submitting it as your own.
- Consequences for your actions:
 - a. I will have a conversation with your parent or guardian.
 - b. Your administrator and guidance counselor will be notified.
 - c. You will not receive credit for the work that was compromised.
 - d. You will have to work hard to earn my trust again.

I will gladly write letters of recommendation for any student who has resisted the temptation to cheat.

Template G | Class Participation

High
School

Class Participation Self-Assessment

Class participation is a key component in practicing your communicative skills, which are essential in language proficiency. Participation involves more than just raising your hand. Students have to be attentive, participate in partner activities, speak the target language formally and informally, and come to class prepared. If your teacher agrees that you exceed expectations in this area, you will be able to drop your lowest quiz grade at the end of the quarter. These weekly self-assessments will keep you focused on your progress in this area.

Name: _____ Period _____

Date: _____ Language: _____

Place a check in the box indicating your participation in these activities over the past week:

1 = occasionally, 2 = half the time, 3 = most of the time, 4 = always

Activity	1	2	3	4
I brought my textbook, notebook, and writing materials to class.				
I paid attention in class and conversed only when asked to do so.				
I raised my hand to answer questions.				
I participated in partner drills.				
I participated in other activities when asked to do so.				
I spoke the target language when spoken to.				
I spoke the target language informally in class.				
I came to class with my homework completed and was able to participate when my teacher went over the assignment.				
Student's Self-Assessment Total Score:	_____/32			
Teacher's Validation Score:	_____/32			

Conversion Chart:

Exceeds Expectations		Meets Expectations		Almost Meets Expectations	
32	100%	25	92%	17	83%
31	99%	24	91%	16	82%
30	98%	23	89.5%	15	80.5%
29	96%	22	88.5%	14	79.5%
28	95%	20	86%	13	78%
27	94%	19	85%	12	77%
26	93%	18	84%	11	76%

Template H

Emergency Lesson Plan 1

High
School

Emergency Lesson Plan: Level 1

All the materials for this lesson are in this manila envelope. Please do not worry if you do not speak German. I have provided a list of expressions in German and English for you to use.

High School German 1

Theme: Social Life

Topic: Weather and Seasons

Targeted standards: _____

Objective:

- Students will ask and answer questions about the weather and seasons.

Essential learning:

- Students will express months and numbers associated with weather and seasons.
- Students will ask and answer questions about the weather.
- Students will identify seasons and the weather associated with each.

How this lesson connects with what has already been learned:

- Students have learned weather expressions. Producing weather posters will review weather expressions. Ask students to identify words they recognize and to guess what season it is.
- The graphic organizer will have students produce words and phrases on their own related to weather expressions and seasons.

How to engage the student:

- Tell students that today they will be able to ask and answer questions about the weather.
- Present pictures of several weather conditions and review the weather expressions that have been previously learned.
- Have students share their own opinion of today's weather. (*It is warm. The sun is shining. It is not windy.*)

Today's lesson:

- Ask students to follow your model on the overhead transparency or board and write out weather expressions for each season on the four index cards you provided.
- Have students turn to a student sitting close to them for five minutes to ask what the weather is like in a particular season (*What is the weather like in the winter?*). Students respond using their index card as a cue if needed (*The weather is cold*). Students record what their partner says on the back of their index card (e.g., *In the winter the weather is cold. It is hot in the summer.*).
- On the overhead transparency showing pictures of various weather scenes, have students come up and write a weather expression under the picture. Have them guess what season is by asking a student: *When is it hot?*
- Ask students to clarify their findings by responding to a few follow-up questions.
- Hand each student a piece of construction paper and have him or her divide the paper in fourths. Have students label each quarter panel with the name of a season. Students then are to draw a weather scene for each season and write as many expressions as possible under each scene.

Student reflection:

- Have students consult the overhead transparency or board for any weather expression they forgot to include.
- Have students think about weather conditions in other parts of the world.

How this lesson affects the next lesson:

Explain that tomorrow they will learn how to deliver a weather report. In a few days, they will present a weather report and a forecast to the class using weather maps.

Materials included in this packet:

Weather posters

Overhead transparencies of weather scenes or pictures to be posted on the board

Construction paper

Index cards

A list of weather expressions in English and in the target language for substitute teacher

Template I

Emergency Lesson Plan 2

High
School**Emergency Lesson Plan: Level 3**

All the materials for this lesson are in this manila envelope. Please do not worry if you do not speak the target language. The students will be able to work collaboratively in groups.

High School Spanish 3

Theme: Environment

Topic: Ecology

Targeted standards: _____

Objective:

- Students will ask and answer questions about ecology.

Essential learning:

- Students will understand and produce vocabulary related to ecological issues.
- Students will ask and answer questions related to conservation.
- Students will incorporate the conditional mood into their communication using clauses with “should.”

How this lesson connects with what has already been learned:

- Students have created posters on ecology prior to this lesson. The posters are posted on the wall. The students may use the posters to generate ideas. Students will utilize the learned vocabulary when producing a children’s book on ecology.
- Students will use a graphic organizer to capture learned words and phrases related to ecological issues and conservation.

How to engage the student:

- Tell students that today they will start writing a 20-page children’s book on ecology and conservation. They will be able to ask and answer questions about the ecology and conservation.
- Have students share ideas about how one should present information to 6-year-old children.

Today’s lesson:

- Ask students to form groups of four and distribute the handouts which include instructions.
- Each student will have an assignment: 1) recorder, 2) editor, 3) illustrator, 4) publisher.
- Have students brainstorm how they want to present the information to children.
- Ask students to clarify their findings by responding to a few questions provided in the handout.
- Hand each group a packet of 20 sheets of blank paper and ask them to create a draft of the questions/answers that will go on each page.
- The students will have the following responsibilities:
- The **recorder** will write down the ideas for each page.
- The **illustrator** will suggest pictures/images that should be included.
- The **editor** will edit the language structures, content, and vocabulary.
- The **publisher** will arrange the content and decide on the layout of the book.

Reflection:

- Have students consult their textbooks (and authentic material provided in this packet) for any ecology/conservation expressions they forgot to include.
- Have students think about ecological issues in Spanish-speaking countries.

How this lesson affects the next lesson:

Explain that the next lesson will be devoted to completing the book and peer editing. When the project is finished, the students will send the books to the neighboring elementary school that has a large Spanish-speaking population for display in its library.

Materials included in this packet:

Posters with vocabulary related to ecology and conservation
 Instruction packets for each student
 Authentic articles on ecology (that have already been discussed)
 Packets of 20 blank sheets (one per group)
 Rubric on how the project will be assessed