Activity Template

- **Title** Apology Accepted
- **Author** Tony Becker and Tatiana Nekrasova
- **Proficiency level**
  - _____ Beginning  ____X____ Intermediate _____ Advanced
- **Grade level**
  - Adult ESL setting in the United States
- **Purpose of the activity**
  - The purpose of the activity is to get adult ESL students to communicate meaningfully with their classmates, using speech acts in the form of apologies.
- **Type of activity**
  - Individual and group work
- **Objective(s)**
  - **Skills:** Speaking and listening
    - 1) Enable students to properly express an apology
    - 2) Explain why the offense happened
    - 3) Make a repair for the offense
- **Duration**
  - 50-60 minutes; Time depends upon how in-depth the teacher decides to get with the intensification of apologies, and how many situations are considered.
- **Materials and technology**
  - Television and VCR/DVD player
  - VCR tape or DVD
  - Handout for students

  The teacher should show a popular television show that uses several types of apologies [e.g., Friends: DVD Season 2, Disc 2 Episode 2; Everybody Loves Raymond: “Your Place or Mine,” Season 1, Episode 7; Will & Grace: “Blanket Apology,” Season 8, Episode 21]. Several short scenes should be used to offer a variety of opportunities for
apologies used in various situations. The teachers will then need a television and/or VCR/DVD player to present the shows to the students. Also, teachers should prepare a handout, with various apologies, for students to read from and practice.

- **Activity**

  The students will first have several types of apologies modeled for them, by the teacher. Afterwards, the teacher will play the video (mentioned above) for students, and the apologies used in the video should be brought to the students’ attention.

  Then, students should review expressions of apology with the teacher, such as “excuse,” “forgive,” or “apologize” (see Appendix One). Students should be made aware that different apologies should be used when expressing an apology orally, or in writing. At this point, students should be given the Apology Handout, and they should review different apologies used in America, as well as several types of intensifiers.

  Once this is done, the teacher should model some of the apologies with students and indicate which intensifiers should be used with specific apologies to match the appropriate situations. This should be done well before the second and third steps of American apologies: acknowledgement of responsibility and an offer of repair. These two areas can supplement the lesson on apologies.

  After students are familiar with the many different types of apologies, and some of the situations in which they should be appropriately used, the teacher should assign groups. Students should be given specific scenarios (see Appendix Two for a list of possible scenarios that match expressions of apology presented in Appendix One), in which they are to assess the situation and offer an appropriate apology. Students should be allowed to practice several scenarios, as well as several different types of apologies.

  The teacher should also take into consideration some of the factors that may affect how students would deliver an apology:

  1. familiarity with the person being apologized to
  2. the intensity of the act
  3. the relative authority that each of the people have
  4. relative ages
  5. gender
  6. the place where the exchange takes place
  7. modality (orally vs. in writing).

- **References**


- **Useful Links**

  http://www.eslmonkeys.com/teacher/lessonplans_d.php?id=100

  http://www.english-test.net/esl/learn/english/grammar/

  This resource provides a very useful integrated-skills lesson plan for raising student awareness of apologies commonly used, as well as a creative and fun song that includes numerous examples of apologies embedded within it.

  http://esl.about.com/od/listeninglessonplans/a/youtube.htm

  For those teachers who feel more comfortable with gathering their media materials from the Internet, this resource gives a brief overview of how to implement “Youtube” into the classroom. Using Youtube allows teachers to search specifically for videos that might include apologies, rather than searching the Internet or watching hours of television.

Appendix One
Expressions of Apology

1. I’m very sorry that I’m late but the main road was blocked due to construction.
2. I am sorry to interrupt you, but could you please repeat the last part one more time?
3. Please send my apologies to the meeting, as I shan’t be able to attend.
4. There’s really no excuse for my behavior last night. I hope that in time we can get back to where we used to be.
5. I beg your pardon, I must’ve dialed the wrong number.
6. I am very sorry for what I did. Please accept this small present as my way of making amends for all the trouble I’ve caused.
7. Please forgive me for interrupting you, I didn’t realize you were busy with someone else.
8. I know I shouldn’t have made those remarks about your work and I hope you now know how deeply I regret what I said. If it helps to put things right, please let me take back everything I said earlier.

Appendix Two

Possible Apology Scenarios

A. You are late for work.
B. You cannot understand what someone else is saying to you.
C. You are writing to a colleague informing him/her that you cannot attend a meeting in the afternoon.
D. You insulted a friend last night.
E. You dial the wrong telephone number.
F. You accidentally grab the wrong luggage bag.
G. You came to the meeting with your boss, but he/she was busy with another person.
H. You were wrong criticizing your colleague’s work.