

Lesson Plan: Let's take a trip

By Sarah Sahr

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One thing I have learned is that students love to talk about where they come from. Even more so, students love talking to people who are going to visit their home country. Travel lessons are some of my favorite activities... mostly because I LOVE to travel. Watching these types of lessons unfold with a multilingual, multilevel classroom warms my heart because there is always something for everyone. This "Let's take a trip" lesson is a great end-of-year project when you are looking for authentic, engaging activities to fill those days between standardized testing and the last day of school.

Language Level:

Intermediate, with adaptations for beginning and advanced language learners

Materials:

Encourage students for weeks prior to this lesson to bring in location-specific items such as travel guides (in any language), maps, vacation brochures, souvenirs, photos, ethnic artifacts (clothing, pottery, etc.), and travel Web site URLs. Make sure the items are identified by the student's name.

These items will be used in the Travel Show and Tell portion of this lesson.

Time:

This project can take several days, but it can also be spread out and worked on for a series of weeks.

Objective(s):

Students will be able to:

- Produce a travel information packet (flyer, brochure, power point, wiki, etc.) with useful information about a region, country, city, or town.
- Focus on a particular grammar point based on their language proficiency.
- Present their travel information to the class in a 7–10 minute group presentation.

Introduction (Motivation): 15 minutes

Travel Show and Tell! (This involves some initial planning.)

Show and Tell is a simple public speaking activity used at various levels of education:

1. Students bring in a small item that can fit into their bag and is school appropriate.
2. Each student who has an item, one by one, comes to the front of the class and talks about that item for at least 45 seconds.
3. Participation is voluntary.
4. There is no grade given.

Let students know about a week ahead of time that they can bring in an item that they would like to talk about. Let them know this will be “Travel Show and Tell,” with an emphasis on *travel*. This item should be from their home country or a place they have recently visited. Let students take a few moments to get together their thoughts on what they would like to say about their item. Give them some guidance on what they should talk about in their 45 seconds:

- Where is your item from?
- Do you think people would like to visit where you got that item? Why?

If time allows after the show and tell, ask students in pairs to decide on the three places they would go based on what they’ve heard and why. Have pairs share this information with the class.

Making Groups: 5–10 minutes

The class will be divided into groups. Often as teachers, we are faced with the dilemma of making groups. In this activity, group creation is pivotal to how the lesson moves forward. Groups could be made homogeneously or heterogeneously:

Homogeneous:

- Groups based on ancestral regions (Middle East, South America, Africa, etc.): This allows students to bring personal and prior knowledge to the group.
- Groups based on language proficiency: Students are all on the same language level, reducing feelings of intimidation.

Heterogeneous:

- Groups can be randomly selected: Students are subject to “luck of the draw.”
- Groups can have a mix of language proficiencies: Students can divide tasks more easily based on language complexities.

Groups of 4–6 work best, but your classes might be bigger or smaller. Decide what is best for your class and go from there.

Empower your students to make their own decisions as groups. There is no correct way of getting the travel information to the class. Let the groups decide how they want

to present things.

Create Travel Information: Time varies

Each group will need to produce a certain amount of travel information. This information can be presented as a brochure, a power point, a flyer, and so on. Each group will produce several “Must Haves.” Groups can also produce “Could Haves” if time allows and students are able. This could take days, it could be homework, or it could be revisited every week for up to 4 weeks. Look at your calendar and see how it might fit in. Some suggestions for the lists follow, but you know your students best; choose what you’d like as the “Must Haves” and if they have time, they could elect to put a few of the “Could Haves” in their travel information:

Must Haves	Could Haves
Travel Sections <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Short History Section- 3 “must see” sites- Best time of year to travel, including weather- A recommended daily budget	Travel Sections <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Common Phrases- Places to eat- Festivals and/or holidays- Places to stay
Presentation Format <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Paper flyer/brochure- Photos	Additional Presentation Format <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Power Point- Wiki*

Suggestions: Use symbols and icons to denote information, i.e. \$ / €, 🇺🇸, ☁️, 🌧️, !!, 🌞 etc. The Travel Sections can be paired up so each group member has to write two. Bring in travel books like *Lonely Planet*, *Let’s Go* or *Frommer’s* as reference. Allow for computer time to research links that would enhance presentations.

Assigning Responsibilities: 5–10 minutes

Once groups have been decided, look at the lists of “Must Haves” and “Could Haves.”

Assign roles be assigned to each group members; I strongly suggest the following, though any roles can be chosen. When assigning roles, please take into consideration proficiency levels:

- **Travel Agent (1 student):** This person will lead the group. This includes setting deadlines, making sure people stay on task, and editing all content. This person will also present the bulk of the information to the class.
- **Tour Guides (3–5 students can take this role):** These people will be creating the bulk of the travel information. They should choose items they are comfortable writing about.

Options:

I would recommend having a grammar focus and specific word lengths for language proficiencies (please use grammar points students have worked on in class):

- Beginner – each item must be at least 50 words using present tense
Intermediate – each item must have at least 100 words using at least one conditional statement
Advanced – each item must have at least 100 words, at least one conditional, and at least one compound/complex sentence.

Presentations (assessment):

Revisit Travel Show and Tell but have students come forwards as a group. They should bring the items they have created and explain each one. As mentioned above, the Travel Agent would do the bulk of the presentation. However, each student should present their pieces to the class. Don't let the Travel Agent run the show (no matter how much they want to). Make sure each student gets a chance to speak.

*Possible pages for creating online wikis:

- <http://www.wikispaces.com/>
Example: <http://traveljapan.wikispaces.com/>
- <http://www.wetpaintcentral.com/>
Example: <http://www.australiatravelwiki.com/>
- <https://plans.pbworks.com/signup/edubasic20> (make sure you choose the FREE one...)
Example: <http://activetravel.pbworks.com/>

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