

PERSONAL PROFILES

Most classes start with an icebreaker activity on the first day of class as a way to connect students and to create a more comfortable and welcoming environment. After the first day, however, teachers and students often refocus their efforts on the content of the course and do not continue building the classroom community. Although the course content is very important, teachers and students must remember, as discussed in the introduction, that a well-developed sense of community can play a vital role in students' ability to learn content and achieve the course's expectations and goals. Therefore, it is important to continue developing and nurturing student-to-student and student-to-teacher relationships to build a strong sense of community. In this week's Teacher's Corner, you will learn about a daily activity that can help everyone in the class get to know each other a little bit better.

LEVEL

Any level

GOALS

During this activity, students will be able to

- Learn some personal details about their classmates
- Share some personal details about themselves
- Nurture stronger relationships with classmates and teacher(s)

MATERIALS

- Pencil/pen and paper
- Magazines, pictures, colored pencils, or any available art materials

PREPARATION

- This activity is intended to occur regularly on a daily or weekly basis for at least part of a course session.

- Gather any available art materials and have them ready each day for class. Materials could include colored pencils, magazines, colored paper, paper, glue, tape, markers, etc.
- Write the following questions on the board for the first day of the activity.
 - What is your name?
 - Where do you live?
 - Who lives in your home with you?
 - What is your favorite subject in school?
 - What is your favorite thing to do when you arrive home from school each day?
 - What is your favorite English word?

PROCEDURE

1. On the first day of this activity, explain to students that they are going to develop a profile of themselves to share with their classmates (see Appendix A for an example). The profiles will be collected and posted on the walls around the room. Every day (or every week), students will add another piece of information to their profile and share the new information with two different classmates. The class will work on the profiles for several weeks until everyone in the class learns a little bit about everyone else.
2. Turn students' attention to the board and the questions you wrote earlier. Explain that today they will create a profile using any of the art materials available. For example, students can create a collage of pictures and write their answers on the paper, or students can draw pictures and write their answers to the questions.
 - a. Explain that they will need to save room on their profiles so that they can add more information later.
 - b. Also, tell students that the teacher will be making a profile as well since you are a part of the class.

3. Give students ample time to work on this activity, with anywhere from 15-30 minutes on the first day. After creating the profiles on the first day, adding information to them in future classes can be done in 5-7 minutes.
4. When students have finished creating their profiles, ask everyone to hang their profiles around the room.
5. Divide the class in half. Ask one half of the students to stand by their profiles and introduce themselves. Ask the other half of the students to circulate around the room to read the profiles and meet the students.
 - a. For example, ask the visiting students to go and stand by a presenter and his or her profile. Tell the students they will have 1 minute to meet the presenter and ask questions. Then, after the minute is up, clap your hands and tell students to move to the left to meet the next presenter.
 - b. Do this for as much time as you have available. When the first group is finished presenting, switch the students. The visitors are now presenters and the presenters are now visitors.
 - c. Even if you only have time for students to visit 2 or 3 students, remember that this activity will continue for a few weeks. All students will eventually meet each other.
 - d. Include yourself as a presenter and visitor in the activity so that you and your students feel that you are a part of the community.
6. Once the activity is finished, leave the profiles hanging on the walls to return to the next class.
7. Finally, ask for a volunteer to come up with a question to ask everyone for the next class. What do students want to know about their classmates? Tell the volunteer that he or she will need to bring the question to the next class.
8. At the beginning of the next class, ask the volunteer to write the question he or she developed on the board.

9. Give students a minute to think about their answers, and then ask them to write or use art materials to add their answer to their profiles.
10. After all of the students have added their answers to their profiles, put the students into pairs.
 - a. This could be done by counting off students so that there are two students for each number. Tell the students with the number “one” that they will be partners today and to share their profiles with each other, and so on.
 - b. Keep track of which students are paired. As you move through this activity regularly, you’ll want students who have not met or talked to each other to work together. One easy way to do this is to have students find a person they haven’t met yet. At first, students will be eager to work with new students, but after a time, you’ll see the goal of the activity working as students will start to develop relationships with other students and will want to work with the same classmates again. At this point, you will need to step in and set up new pairings of students.
11. This activity can be continued throughout the entirety of the course. You may choose to stop it earlier than that, but a minimum of five classes is necessary to see the full effects.

VARIATIONS

For younger learners or beginning writers, try having students use pictures or drawings to describe their answers. The students can still participate in the oral sharing activity but don’t need to worry about the written part of the activity. Another alternative is to vary the questions for your students based on their age, interests, and level of English. You could write the questions initially, as shown in this activity, or the students could begin the activity by writing the questions.

My name is Alma.



I live in an apartment by the river with my brother and grandmother.

I love English class and every day when I get home from school, I like to watch a TV show in English. My favorite is *Lazy Town*.



DELICIOUS

My favorite English word is "delicious." I love the way it sounds!