

## Unit 1

**Level:** Beginners

**Age:** Adults

**Time:** Approx. 90 minutes

**Language objectives:** *hello, what's your name?*, alphabet, *repeat please, spell please*, numbers 1-5, *book, pen, chair, table, goodbye*

**Key skills:** speaking, reading, listening, writing

**Materials:** one set of cut-out alphabet cards (laminated, if possible) per pair of students; one set of flashcards; one *Repeat please* sign; one *Spell please* sign; the following objects in the classroom: pen, book, table, chair; sticky labels

### Notes for an interpreter – Part 1

If an interpreter is available (e.g. a family member or friend of the student who speaks good English), try to follow the steps below before or at the start of the lesson.

- Enlist their help with Exercises 1 and 2 and ask them to translate *repeat please* and *spell please* for the student. They should not be encouraged to stay for the whole lesson as this may inhibit the student and / or reinforce the student's dependence on an interpreter.
- Ask them if they can return at the end of the lesson to clarify, if necessary, any language items.
- If they are not available at the end of the lesson, agree on the best means of communication, e.g. by phone or by attaching notes to the student's worksheet.

### Before the lesson

- Write your own name, and each student's name, on separate sticky labels. Place them on a table in the middle of the classroom.
- Stick the *Repeat please* / *Spell please* signs on the front wall of the classroom.

### Procedure

1. When the students enter, smile and say *hello*. If the student replies with *hello*, smile encouragingly and nod to show that is the right response – even if the attempt is not produced perfectly. If the student says nothing, let it pass for now. The word will be reviewed before the end of the lesson and it is important to start on a positive note.

2. Ask a confident-looking student *What's your name?* If the student answers, repeat the name as accurately as possible and watch for signs of confirmation that you have got it right.

If the student looks confused, introduce yourself, e.g. *My name is Susan Smith*. Point to yourself as you say this. Repeat *What's your name?* whilst gesturing to the student. If there is still no response, prompt them by saying their name. That should elicit at least a nod. Repeat *What's your name?* The student should now understand what is required and give their name. Introduce yourself again and ask *What's your name?* Encourage, prompting if necessary, the response, e.g. *My name is Yasmin Asif*. Repeat this process with all the students. Encourage group members to help each other.

3. Model the question *What's your name?* and ask the students to *repeat please*, pointing to the *Repeat please* sign. Put the students in pairs to practise *What's your name? My name is ...* Practise until each student is comfortable with this exchange.

4. Introduce yourself again and make a show of looking for the sticky label with your name on it. Find it and stick it on yourself. Ask *What's your name?* encouraging the response, e.g. *My name is Yasmin Asif*. Using gesture, ask them to find the sticky label with their name and put it on themselves. Repeat this process with all the students and encourage group members to help each other.

5. Write the full alphabet on the whiteboard and play Track 1 (the alphabet chant). Point to each letter as it is named. Play the track several times, encouraging the students to join in at any point if they are able to name a letter. Allow time for students to write any notes on the pronunciation of the letters that will help them remember it. You could test the students at this stage by pausing the audio file and asking students to either say the next letter or point to the last letter spoken on their alphabet formation sheets.

The rhythm of the chant is designed to help students learn the alphabet more easily. It can be repeated several times in the first class and used again in future lessons until the students are comfortable with the alphabet.

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6. Put the alphabet cards on the table. Choose one student's name as a model and use the alphabet cards to form that name. Point to each letter and say it. Ask the students to *repeat please*. Repeat this process with a few students' names. Allow time for students to name the letters before you do. Encourage any student who attempts to do this.

### Alternatives to using the cut-out alphabet cards

Although it will take time to laminate and cut out the alphabet cards, it will be a sacrifice worth making. The cards are extremely versatile and can be used to play a variety of word games and activities (some of which will feature later in the series). Laminating them will protect them and means that you will be able to use them in future lessons.

If you are unable to print the letters in time to teach Unit 1, you could use the following to teach Step 5:

- magnetic letters
- tiles from the board game Scrabble  
(**Note:** these will also have numbers written on so may be confusing for students.)
- write the names on the whiteboard

7. Ask each student, starting with the most confident, *What's your name?* and elicit, e.g. *My name is Yasmin Asif*. Ask *spell please*, pointing to the *Spell please* sign then point to, and name, the letters. Students should repeat, spelling their own name. The students should then model the dialogue (*What's your name? My name is ... Spell please*). Model this again with a confident student and monitor the pairs closely. Practise until each student is comfortable with the exchange.

8. Hand out the student worksheet. Using gesture, ask the students to write their name in the space provided at the top of the page.

9. Refer to Exercise 1. Read the dialogue aloud, following the words with your finger, and complete the dialogue with your own name. Read the dialogue again and ask the students to *repeat please*, pointing to the *Repeat please* sign. Hopefully they will complete the dialogue with their own name. Ask the students to write their own name in the blank space at the end.

10. Refer to Exercise 2. Using gesture, ask the students to complete the skeleton dialogues. Encourage them to cover the original dialogue so they can test themselves.

11. Play Track 2, encouraging the students to follow the words with their fingers. Ask two confident

students to model the dialogue, then put the remaining students in pairs to repeat it (substituting their own names) in pairs.

### Transcript:

**John:** Hello.  
**Emma:** Hello.  
**John:** What's your name?  
**Emma:** My name is Emma Black. What's your name?  
**John:** My name is John Williams.

12. Refer to Exercise 3. Read *Repeat please* and *Spell please*, following the words with your finger. Point out that they are written on the signs on the classroom wall.

13. Perform the following sequence:

- Hold up a pen. Say the word *pen* clearly. Repeat it and then say *repeat please – pen*.
- Hold up a book. Say the word *book* clearly. Repeat it and then say *repeat please – book*.
- Hold up the pen again. Elicit *pen* from the students. If necessary, say the word and ask them to repeat it.
- Hold up the book again. Elicit *book* from the students. If necessary, say the word and ask them to repeat it.
- Point to a table. Say the word *table* clearly. Repeat it and then say *repeat please – table*.
- Repeat steps *c* and *d* and then point to the table again. Elicit *table* from the students.
- Point to a chair. Say the word *chair* clearly. Repeat it and then say *repeat please – chair*.
- Repeat step *f* and then point to the chair again. Elicit *chair* from the students.
- Point to each item in a random order and elicit the words.

14. Hold up the flashcards, one by one. The students should shout out the name of the appropriate object. Using a mix of the flashcards and the real items, reinforce this new vocabulary. Allow the students to point to an item or flashcard and 'test' their fellow classmates. Continue until each student appears to have assimilated the new vocabulary.

15. Refer to Exercise 4. Point to the photos and elicit the word. Point to the written word underneath the photo and read it. Encourage the students to do the same.

16. Spread the flashcards face-up on the table. Point to one and look expectantly at the students. When it

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has been correctly named, turn the flashcard over and place it (now showing the written word) as a label on the actual object.

### Using gesture

At this level, where the spoken word can easily be misunderstood, or simply impossible for the students to understand, gesture is a useful way to communicate. Here are some tips:

- Plan your gestures beforehand.
- Watch out for cultural pitfalls, some gestures may be perceived as rude in other cultures.
- Try them out on a volunteer first to check for clarity of message.
- Be consistent so that students become accustomed to your gestural language.

17. Using your fingers, count *one – two – three – four – five*. Say *repeat please* and count again with the students. Repeat until the students can count 1-5 without your help.

18. Refer to Exercise 5. Point to the numbers in order and say them. Then, point to the numbers in a random order and ask the students to say the number.

19. Refer to Exercise 6. Copy the six rows of numbers (1-5) on the whiteboard, say *four* and circle the number 4 in the first row. Point to the second row, say *three* and allow time for students to circle the number 3. Circulate and help if necessary. Continue in the same way until all the lists have a number circled, ensuring that you keep a note of the order in which you read the numbers. Check the answers as a class.

20. Point to the picture of a woman waving goodbye at the end of the worksheet and say *goodbye*, encouraging any student who attempts to respond with *goodbye*.

### Notes for an interpreter – Part 2

If the interpreter is available at the end of the class, try and establish the following:

- Did the student understand the meaning of *hello* and *goodbye*?
- Is there anything that was not clear?

Stress that the student should try to practise the language covered before the next lesson.

In particular:

- The student should start a vocabulary notebook where they write down the word, its meaning in their language and how to pronounce it. The overwhelming majority of complete beginner students will be unaware of phonetic symbols but they should be able to make a note which will help them to reproduce the sounds required.
- The student should use the LOOK – SAY – COVER – WRITE – CHECK method to practise writing the words (see the [Introduction to Absolute Beginners](#) for a full explanation of this method). Check that the interpreter can explain this to the student.



# Absolute Beginners

by Frances Marnie

## Unit 1

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- 5
- 1 one
  - 2 two
  - 3 three
  - 4 four
  - 5 five

- 6
- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |



Goodbye!

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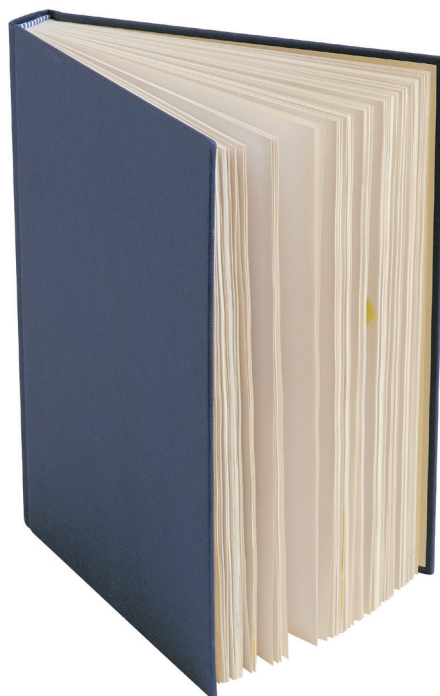
ALPHABET CARDS



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FLASHCARDS

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BOOK

PEN

CHAIR

TABLE

Repeat  
please



spell  
please

