



The ESL

newcomer

## Teaching checklist

Your guide to the most important topics and language structures to teach in those first months with ESL newcomers.

# Hey there!

I am Ieva, an ESL teacher, instructional coach, educational consultant and the face behind [simplyieva.com](http://simplyieva.com), and I am so happy that you decided to take charge of teaching your ESL newcomers!

Maybe you are a new ESL teacher.

Maybe you have experience in teaching but are new to ESL.

Or maybe you just want to feel that you are, in fact, doing things right and feel more confident.

In any case, this ESL newcomer teaching checklist is for you!

When I started teaching (13 years ago now!), I had little clue what I was getting myself into. I was armed with a Bachelor's degree, love for cultures, personal experience of being an English learner and a whole lot of idealism. Honestly, I didn't even know the school system in America that well (read more about my story [here](#)).

But I felt a deep passion for helping English learners and for learning myself.

This led me to get my Master's degree, and, in turn, begin offering support to other ESL teachers (we don't have to do this alone!). That said, I remember those first years and the first time I got a student, who spoke NO.ENGLISH. AT.ALL. I wish I had this checklist back then!

While we all have to experience things our way, it is nice to see that someone has been there before you and has left markers.

What topics to cover first?

What language structures and functions to include?

What to include in my lesson plans?

This checklist will show you what topics are the most important when teaching absolute beginners and what to focus on in your lessons.

It is my sincere hope that it will truly save you time, sanity and build on your confidence.

If you have questions, make sure to email me at [simplyieva@gmail.com](mailto:simplyieva@gmail.com).



*Ieva*

*Creator of The ESL Teacher Boss Society*

# Newcomer teaching checklist

## •Personal and family information

- name, address, phone numbers, age
- spelling of the first and last names
- answering questions about grade, age, school, teacher and where they are from
- family members (words like brother, sister, mother, father, cousin, sibling, aunt, uncle, etc.)

## •Social interaction

- hellos and goodbyes
- asking and thanking
- introduction to peers and non-peers; hand shaking, kissing, etc.
- yes/no questions and answers
- asking for help
- expressing emotions (phrases like I'm sad, I'm happy, etc.)

## •Classroom and school

- items such as books, desks, whiteboard, pens, pencils, computer, etc.
- Class directions (point to, raise your hand, print, copy, turn the page, etc.)
- People who work at school
- Places at school (library, cafeteria, gym)
- Class procedures (announcements, pledge of allegiance, attendance)
- School subjects

## •Time, calendar and weather

- days of the week, months, seasons
- say and write the date
- yesterday, today, tomorrow
- what is the difference between a weekday and weekend
- telling time as well as concepts such as beginning and end, opening and closing, etc.

## • Body parts

- names of body parts
- verbs that are related with the movement and body functions (run, walk, eat, taste, etc.)
- clothing can be included here as well

## •Food

- groups of food (grains, dairy, fruits and vegetables, fats and proteins)
- foods in each of the above-mentioned groups (no need to teach EVERYTHING because there is just so so much. Food that is common in the student's country and in their new country are perfectly fine)
- breakfast, lunch, dinner and what is typically served
- table manners, restaurant manners

## •Shopping

- Money
- Simple math terms (add, subtract, multiply, divide, percent, off, equals, etc.)
- Personnel at the store
- Store departments

## •Directions

- Cardinal directions (N, S, E, W)
- Prepositions
- Location (where in the world are we?)
- Maps

## •Home

- rooms in the house
- furniture
- kitchen tools and appliances

## •The verb “to be” and yes/no questions

- the verb “to be” and its conjugation
- personal pronouns
- simple sentences (This is a book)
- yes/no question formation (Is this a book?)
- typical answers to the yes/no questions (Yes, it is. No, it isn't)
- contractions (it is = it's; I am = I'm, etc.)

## •Wh- questions

- who, what, where, when and why - what these words mean and what the students need to know when answering them (In the beginning, it is perfectly fine to answer these in one word or a phrase).
- how - what does this question ask and how to answer it
- who and where - nouns, what - verbs, when - adverbs and time, why - reason (the word “because”), how - adjectives, adverbs

*Before you go...*

## Here are some helpful tools

Join our free Facebook group [Helping ESL/ELL Teachers K-12](#) for advice, inspiration and collaboration with the people who get you.



No curriculum? No problem!

To save time and gain clarity, check out these ESL/ELL Newcomer Curriculum guides:

~ [ESL Curriculum Guide K-5](#)

~ [ESL Curriculum Guide 6-12](#)



Need support and guidance?

[Join The ESL Teacher Boss Society!](#)

where you will find beginner ESL worksheets and lesson plans and ESL teacher support and professional development