

Using Maps in the LCTL Classroom

Sample Lesson Plan Overview

Level: Beginning-intermediate

Aims: Learn and practice directional vocabulary and forms; gain exposure to important geographical locations; learn and practice prepositions of location

Class time: 30-40 minutes

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Resources: Maps, charts, overhead transparencies, placards

Being able to read maps is an essential part of basic literacy. Knowing the key cities in a country and being familiar with its important geographical features is an integral part of knowing about the target culture. Finally, commanding the language of direction giving is critical to communicative competence.

In the following three lesson plans, maps are used to familiarize students with the geography of the target country. They are further used as a point of departure for focusing on the language of directions and providing targeted practice in asking and giving directions.

- **Where am I?—Learning prepositions with a map**
- **Red Rover—Geography style**
- **It's just past the market on the right—Giving landmark directions**

Where am I?—Learning prepositions with a map

Level: Beginning-advanced

Aims: Learn and practice prepositions associated with location

Class time: 30 minutes

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Resources: Map, chart, overhead transparency

Describing one's exact location in a city is a discourse act that native speakers perform on an almost daily basis, especially in telephone conversations with another person. It is also a popular activity in the language classroom, with teachers employing maps for a variety of purposes. In this activity, students practice describing their location and "find" one another in a game-like format using a city map.

Procedure:

1. Before class, do the following:
 - a. Locate a map in the target language, preferably a simple street map.
 - b. Prepare either an overhead transparency of the map or an enlarged version that can be posted on the wall of the classroom.
 - c. Prepare enough individual versions of the map to distribute to all the students in your class. These maps should have 4-5 locations (e.g., buildings, monuments, street intersections) circled or marked.
 - d. In class, present prepositions of location (e.g. beside, between, near, behind, in front of, through, on). Use the map to illustrate the meanings of those prepositions that students are unfamiliar with.
2. On the overhead or enlarged version of the map, point to a location and ask the students "Where am I?" Have them describe to you where you are, using the targeted prepositions: in front of the museum, beside the embassy, between Abay Prospect and Bukhar Zhyrau Blvd., on Lenin Street, next to the park, etc.
3. Model the guessing activity for students by telling them that you will describe your location and they should find where you are. Ask for volunteers to provide the answer.
4. Pair students and pass out the individual copies of the map.
5. In pairs, have students alternately choose the marked locations and ask one another "Where am I?"
6. Ask for volunteers to describe the locations.
7. Provide feedback on any non target-like use of language.

Caveats and Options:

1. Tourist maps (i.e., those with famous buildings and monuments marked) are especially nice for this activity.
2. Maps of larger areas may also be used; i.e. regional or national maps, students would then be whole countries or provinces.
3. If pairs finish ahead of other students, students may “hide” themselves in the map and describe where they are for their partner to “find” them
4. This can also develop into a lesson that focuses on yes/no questions if prepositions are too easy. “Are you on Lenin St?” “Are you west of the river?” etc.

Red Rover—Geography style

Level: Intermediate-advanced

Aims: Learn and practice directional vocabulary and forms; gain exposure to important geographical features; practice making requests

Class time: 30-40 minutes

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Resources: map, pictures/visual aids, overhead, place name placards

Sometimes games help students to shift their focus from grammatical perfection to language use, thereby promoting language fluency. In this exercise, students practice using directional vocabulary in conjunction with geographical place names in a game-like format. They also gain familiarity with the country's geography and major attractions.

Procedure:

1. Before class, locate a map in the target language, preferably one with a variety of cities and geographical features (lake, mountains) clearly marked.
 - a. Make an overhead or other visual display of the map for the class.
 - b. Collect as many visuals as possible that represent various places on the map. For mountains and rivers, it may not be necessary to have a picture of the exact place, although that would be nice. If a city's primary industry is mining or fishing, it would be appropriate to use such visuals as well.
 - c. Make placards each with the name of a place on the map. Make one for each student.
2. In class, present the geographical figures on the map along with their visuals.
3. Present directional vocabulary (north, south, east, west) as necessary.
4. Engaging the whole class, ask them to name places that are
 - a. East of the capital
 - b. South of the mountains
 - c. Along the river
 - d. Etc.Note their responses on the blackboard.
5. Split the class into two teams for geography Red Rover
 - a. Give each student a placard with the name of a place on the map (you may choose to simply reuse the visuals). These placards represent where the students are "located."
 - b. Explain the "rules" of Geography Red Rover:
 - i. Teams take turns making requests of the other team. For example, Team A can make the following request of Team B: "Please send over all students who are south of the capital." Those members of

- Team B who have been “requested” must then join Team A and it is Team B’s turn to make a request. This procedure is repeated until each team has had 4 turns.
- ii. Team members should collaborate in forming the questions, using a different spokesperson each time
 - iii. Requests cannot be repeated.
 - iv. Requests that include every person from the opposing team are not allowed (e.g., “Please send over all students in Asia.”
 - v. The winning team is the team with the most people at the end of the game.
- c. Begin the game, having each team take turns asking for opposing team members with requests such as...
 - i. Please send over all the students who are north of Mt. Kilimanjaro.
 - ii. Please send over all the students between Hanoi and Hue.
 - d. After each turn, have the “requested” students join the opposing team.
 - e. At the end of the game, tally the scores and declare the winning team. Repeat additional rounds if students express interest.

Caveats and Options:

1. The World Wide Web and tourist brochures are excellent sources of pictures of a country’s major attractions and/or geographical features.
2. Those unfamiliar with the children’s game Red Rover (after which this activity is modeled), should check out the following website:
http://www.gameskidsplay.net/games/strength_games/redrover.htm.
3. Depending on the level of the students, fewer or more phrases may need to be presented for the activity.
4. The number of questions that are asked can vary, but four is probably the minimum for flow and interest’s sake.
5. Students may wish to take time out at the beginning of the game to strategize questions and pre-determine their order of request (i.e., in order to gain the most team members).
6. An alternate objective to gaining the most team members can be to capture the capital of the country. In this case, one student would be in the capital. The other teams would not be allowed to ask directly for the capital but instead would vie for areas which include the capital, e.g.,
 - Team 1: Please send over students west of the mountains. (includes the capital).
 - Team 2: Please send over students south of the river. (includes the capital).

It's just past the market on the right—Giving landmark directions

Level: Intermediate-advanced

Aims: Learn vocabulary for and practice giving directions

Class time: 30 minutes

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Resources: Map (overhead transparency or wall map); individual copies of map

Outside of the U.S., few cities follow a vertical grid pattern. As a result, directions usually include reference to a prominent building or landmark (e.g., “Turn right at the clock tower, then walk toward the palace”). Learning to follow and give instructions in this manner is an important part of communicating with locals, especially when lost in a city! In this activity, students are instructed how to give landmark instructions; they then work in pairs giving and following these directions.

Procedure:

1. Before class, do the following:
 - a. Locate a map in the target language; a tourist map indicating with popular sights is ideal.
 - b. Prepare either an overhead transparency of the map or an enlarged version that can be posted on the wall of the classroom.
 - c. Prepare enough individual versions of the map to distribute to all the students in your class. These maps should have 4-5 prominent locations (e.g., buildings, monuments, street intersections) circled or marked.
2. In class, present directional vocabulary and phrases
 - a. Turn right at the first street
 - b. Go past the park and turn left after the shoe repair kiosk.
 - c. Go down the street away from the 10 story hotel.
 - d. Walk toward the palace and turn right after the fountain.
3. On the overhead, present the map with two markers somewhere on the map. Ask students to use the presented phrases to give directions from one point to the next. Use a bean or penny to actually move along with students' directions.
4. Pair students and pass out copies of the map with 4-6 points marked on it.
5. Have each pair choose two new points on the map (Points A and B). Ask them to collaboratively write out directions from Point A to Point B using the presented phrases.
6. Have students change partners. Each new pair should consist of a student who has the written directions and one who doesn't. Hand out a bean to each new pair, asking the student with the written directions to direct his/her new partner from

- Point A to Point B. As directions are given, the student who is listening should guide the bean through the streets from starting point A to the final destination B.
7. While this activity is in progress, circulate and provide feedback to students especially when the directions become unclear.

Caveats and Options:

1. If a map is not available, one can be drawn on the board, butcher paper, overhead transparency.
2. More complex phrases can be introduced to more advanced students.
3. This process of pair writing and pair switching can be repeated, especially if more points are marked on the map.