

Family and Home

Classroom at a Glance

Teacher:	Debra Terry
Language:	French
Grade:	5
School:	Rebecca M. Johnson Elementary School, Springfield, Massachusetts
Lesson Date:	January 15
Class Size:	25
Schedule:	45 minutes, three times per week

Video Summary

In this lesson, students learn and review vocabulary that refers to family members, rooms of the house, and activities in the home. They cut out pictures from French magazines and use them to create an imaginary family tree. Then they work in pairs to match pictures of families with written descriptions. The class also practices reading comprehension by putting together sentence strips.

Standards Addressed

- Communication: Interpersonal
- Connections: Making Connections

Read about these standards at the end of this lesson.

Key Terms

- backward planning
- Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES)

Definitions for these terms can be found in the Glossary located in the Appendix.

Class Profile

"I think the most valuable lesson that my kids can take away from my room is that language learning is accessible to them and it could open a door for them that might not have been opened before."—Debra Terry

School Profile

Debra Terry teaches French in grades K–5 at Rebecca M. Johnson Elementary School in Springfield, Massachusetts. The school serves primarily the Mason Square area, a neighborhood located in the heart of the city, but also accepts students from across Springfield. The school's 775 students reflect the diversity of the Springfield community, an urban center with a population of approximately 150,000 people.

Lesson Design

The Springfield Public School District has developed and implemented a curriculum that defines the scope and sequence for the K–12 foreign language program. This curriculum, which is regularly updated by the Foreign Languages Curriculum Committee, draws on the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (see Resources). Teachers design individual lessons in accordance with this curriculum, making accommodations for their personal teaching style, their students' needs, and the resources that are available to them. Ms. Terry often uses backward planning when designing lessons within the scope and sequence. "I start with the big picture," she says. "Here's what I need them to know by the end of this unit. How am I going to get them there?"

Year at a Glance

Weather and Calendar
Basic Vocabulary
Numbers
Family
Home
School
Geography
Animal Habitats
Food
(Holidays and Cultural Studies are incorporated throughout the year.)

The Lesson

This videotaped lesson, part of a unit on the home, combined new and old vocabulary to teach students how to talk about family members and their activities in different rooms in the home. "If you can say your mom is in the living room, you can transfer that to other people and places," Ms. Terry says. In the lesson that followed this one, students shared sentences they wrote for homework. Their classmates placed figurines representing family members in a model house to demonstrate the sentences. Students then continued to practice creating original sentences about family and home. Finally, students were assessed on listening comprehension before moving on to the next unit.

Key Teaching Strategies

- **Manipulating Language Structures:** The teacher helps students develop an awareness of how the language is structured by engaging them in reading activities that involve rearranging sentence fragments to change meaning.
- **Visualizing Vocabulary:** The teacher uses visuals to establish concrete images of vocabulary and to help students remember the terms.

Analyze the Video

As you reflect on these questions, write down your responses or discuss them as a group.

Before You Watch

Respond to the following questions:

- How might teachers demonstrate sensitivity when teaching vocabulary about family or other topics related to students' personal lives?
- In elementary or middle school classes, new students may enter the program with no previous foreign language education. How do you integrate beginners into the learning cycle without causing continuing students to lose momentum?
- What activities do you use to help students move toward interpersonal communication?
- How do you design activities that are effective for different kinds of learners, such as kinesthetic learners and visual learners?

Watch the Video

As you watch "Family and Home," take notes on Ms. Terry's instructional strategies, particularly how she plans activities, distributes materials, and deals with sensitive issues related to students' families. Write down what you find interesting, surprising, or especially important about the teaching and learning in this lesson.

Reflect on the Video

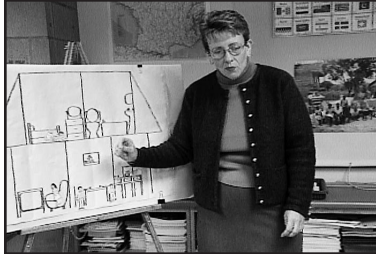
Review your notes, and then respond to the following questions:

- What methods does Ms. Terry use to illustrate the vocabulary? When does she lead the activities and when do students work together?
- How does Ms. Terry address potentially sensitive issues when teaching vocabulary related to the family?
- What is the purpose of the "What's missing?" activity? How is this activity different from having students identify what they see? How do students react to this activity?
- How does Ms. Terry model language during discussions with students?

Analyze the Video, cont'd.

Look Closer

Take a second look at Ms. Terry's class to focus on specific teaching strategies. Use the video images below to locate where to begin viewing.

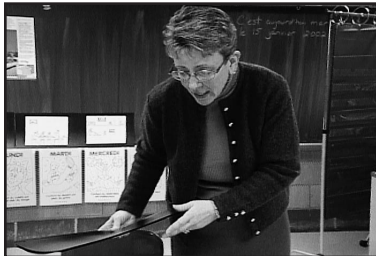


Video Segment: Working in Pairs

You'll find this segment approximately 16 minutes and 30 seconds after the video starts. Watch for about 4 minutes and 30 seconds.

Students place cutouts of imaginary family members on a picture of a house, based on sentences provided by their partner.

- Describe the partner activity from the students' perspective. What language task does the student with the "A" card have? The student with the "B" card?
- How does the activity reinforce language learning? How does working with their partner's sentences, instead of their own, enhance the activity for students?
- What materials does Ms. Terry prepare for the activity? How do these materials contribute to student success in carrying out the task?



Video Segment: Learning To Read

You'll find this segment approximately 22 minutes and 30 seconds after the video starts. Watch for about 2 minutes and 30 seconds.

Students arrange sentence strips (sentence parts written on strips of paper) in different combinations on a board to create different sentences.

- How does Ms. Terry organize the sentence-strip activity?
- How does the activity develop students' oral and reading comprehension skills?
- How does Ms. Terry assess student comprehension of the sentences?
- How is this activity similar to strategies used by elementary school language arts teachers?

Connect to Your Teaching

Reflect on Your Practice

As you reflect on these questions, write down your responses or discuss them as a group.

- How do you stay in the target language in a beginning class where much of the teaching is new vocabulary?
- How do you help students progress from oral language to written language?
- If you teach without a textbook, how do you structure your lessons and obtain materials? What are the advantages and the challenges of teaching without a textbook?

Watch Other Videos

Watch other videos in the *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12* library for more examples of teaching methodologies like those you’ve just seen. Note: All videos in this series are subtitled in English.

“Holidays and Seasons” (German) illustrates sentence-strip activities for third-graders, and “Chicken Pox” (French) introduces written language to kindergarteners.

Put It Into Practice

Try these ideas in your classroom.

- When teaching vocabulary related to the family, provide students with the terms needed to describe today’s family structures. Traditionally, words like *mother*, *father*, *sister*, and *brother* were considered basic vocabulary, while words like *stepmother* and *foster parent* were considered more advanced. In a standards-based program, the goal is for all students to exchange information about their families and homes. Therefore, any vocabulary that a student needs for that purpose should be considered basic. Ms. Terry gave her students vocabulary for any family members that they chose to include in their imaginary family trees. You can also have students describe popular literary, television, or film families in order to include a wide range of family structures.
- Use oral activities from elementary and middle school language arts classes to introduce literacy skills. For example, after Ms. Terry was confident that students knew the words for family members, rooms of the house, and household activities, she wrote sentence parts on strips of paper that could be rearranged to form new sentences. You could also have beginning readers match labels and visuals, or select dialogue for the speech balloons in comic strips. For more ideas like these, talk to the language arts teachers in your school. Note that teachers of character-based languages, such as Japanese and Chinese, cannot rely solely on sound/symbol correspondences and must also develop character recognition skills.

Resources

Curriculum References

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/>

Debra Terry's Recommendations

Web Resources:

Annonces Immobilières

<http://www.entrepaticuliers.com>

A real estate search engine that includes photos and descriptions of homes (available in English, French, and Italian)

K–3 Themes at Enchanted Learning

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/themes/>

Online dictionaries, activities, and other lesson materials organized by theme (available in Dutch, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish); note: this site requests support from users but does not currently charge for access to content

Yahoo! France

<http://www.fr.yahoo.com>

The French-language version of the popular search engine

Standards

National Standards for Foreign Language Learning

Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century defines what students should know and be able to do in foreign language education. This lesson correlates to the following standards:

Communication: Communicate in Languages Other Than English

Standard 1.1: Interpersonal Communication

Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

Connections: Connect With Other Disciplines and Acquire Information

Standard 3.1: Making Connections

Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.