

## Special Needs Class:

### Lesson Plan Layout

1. **5-10 minutes: Warm-up and review**  
Allows students time to recall old information and access English section of brain.
2. **5-10 minutes: Teach new material**  
I use very simple examples and a lot of repetition. The students also enjoy when the speed of repetition increases and decreases dramatically.
3. **20 minutes: Activity using new material**  
I have found that it takes about 3 lessons of teaching material before it sticks. I try to incorporate old information with new when planning activities.
4. **5-10 minutes: Story time**  
Implementing the same plan in every class allows students to build a routine and hopefully decrease the time used for explanation of/transition between activities.

## Monthly Plans

### Month 1

#### Week 1 Alphabet and colors

1. Memory game : Alphabet
2. Hold cards of different colors up and repeat name
  - a. Red, orange, yellow, green, purple, blue
3. I spy : Place letters, of alphabet, around the room. Each letter should be a color, one of the 6 taught that day. Students take turns 'spying'. Students spies a letter then says, "red" and "A" or "/a/" or "apple." The other students try to find the letter of the specific color called.
4. Read a book.
  - a. Brown Bear

#### Week 2 Colors and shapes

1. Karuta : colors
2. Teach shapes using shape cards.
3. Role the die: Prepare before class two large dice, one with a different color on each side and the other with different shapes. Allow students to help you post the shape cutouts, every shape in every color, around the room. Students take turns rolling the dice. The students must find the shape rolled in the color rolled. Students will have as much fun hiding as finding.
4. Read a book.
  - a. Brown Bear

#### Week 3 Colors and animals

1. I spy: colors, shapes, and letters
2. Teach animals using pictures. Teach animal name and sound.
  - a. pig, dog, cat, frog, bird, cow, horse
3. "Old Mac Donald" : teach/sing this song. Allow students to say animal name when picture is held up. Kids become more involved if you have the music also.
4. Read a book
  - a. Brown Bear

#### Week 4 Animals

1. "Old Mac Donald"
2. Review animals taught previously. Teach more animals.
3. Karuta or memory: animals
4. Read a book
  - a. Brown Bear

## Month 2

### Week 1 Brown bear

1. Review animals and colors. Use pictures
2. Make a book: Students make new pages for Brown Bear.  
Copy the first page from the book. Create blank pages, with the same text but no picture. Students draw picture and fill in underlined part. Teacher may have to assist students with the writing. You can choose whether to allow each student to make an entire book or each student make one page for the class book.

Brown Bear Brown Bear,

What do you see?

I see a pink pig looking at me.

### Week 2 Brown bear

Students love to draw so I would allow two weeks to complete. Also have students practice reading their pages.

### Week 3 Animals and body parts

1. Students present the book.
2. Teach body parts: have one student lie down on a large piece of paper. Trace their body. Hang paper up on wall. As you teach each part point to it/ draw it in.
3. Twister: body and colors. Instead of having only one board you can scatter colored paper around the room. When the new color and part is rolled students change; they do not need to keep previously rolled parts connected to paper.
4. Read a book.
  - a. Reread the class book. This time use it to count body parts. How many legs does the ~ have? How many eyes?

### Week 4 Body parts

1. Head, shoulders, knees and toes...
2. Use the poster person made in previous class to review the parts of the body.
3. TP the teacher: Teacher sits on a chair at the front of the room. Give the students a roll, or two, of toilet paper. Teacher says, "My head hurts!" Students run to the teacher and wrap the hurt body part in toilet paper.
4. Read a book.
  - a. The Hungry Caterpillar.

## Other Ideas

1. Fill ziplock bags with hair gel and food coloring. Once sealed, perhaps twice with tape. Allow students to draw and erase letters in the bag. This is great because you can place a letter card under the bag and allow students to trace.
2. Cut letters out of sandpaper or any textured paper. Allow students to create a rubbing of their name, or any picture. Place textured shape/letter under paper and rub with crayon/chalk.
3. Speaking practice. Have students make a circle. Give them a ball, a soft ball. If a specific grammar point was taught have them practice it while throwing the ball. One student says, "I like apples." Then throws the ball to the next person who says, "I like ~."  
Another variation is to give each student a word. Make sure that within each circle there is a Japanese and English translation. Students throw the ball from the English word to the Japanese translation. When finished rewind the circle. Same can be done with pictures and words.

## Special Needs Classes: A Model Lesson Plan

### Review of previous material

I always begin each class with a review of previous material. In fact, the "review" can often take up the bulk of the lesson. Students gain confidence from practicing and repeating familiar language items, and are primed for learning new language later on in the lesson. I use flash cards and encourage the students to quiz each other on previous material.

### For example:

One student selects a picture of an animal and does not show it to rest of the group. The other students try to guess what animal the student has by asking questions. Of course, teachers are required to prompt students and help them guess. Full interrogative sentences can be replaced by the use of adjectives with rising intonation.

E.G Is it big? /Big? Is it fat/Fat?

I find that encouraging the students to ask each other questions reduces reliance on teacher instruction, and generally creates a more inquisitive student mindset.

At this point, I would also review previous material through singing or chanting as a group. Personally, I have made use of a variety of material including "Songs and Chants", published by Longman, and the "Genki English" CDs.

I try to sing each song that the students have learnt (as part of the review section of the lesson) EVERY week. This may sound like a lot of repetition, but educationally I have found it more valuable than traditional warm-up activities, such as "Simon says".

### New Material

I use laminated flash cards to introduce new/unfamiliar vocabulary. Firstly, I ask the questions about the cards:

What's this? Where is this? Do you like this?

At this point, the teachers should help the students respond. The ALT should also ask the special needs teachers, as this sets a positive example to the students.

Secondly, I would then get the students to ask each other questions about the cards (with teacher assistance/prompts).

### Example Student Conversation

A: What is this?

B: Elephant. (ALT/Teacher prompt: It's an elephant.)

A: Do you like? (Prompt: Do you like it?)

B: Yes.

A: Where? (Prompt: Where is it?)

B: Indo. (Prompt: In India.)

### Warming down

I suggest using the last five/ten minutes as a warm down period. The time can be used for various activities, such as reading picture books with the students, coloring pictures related to national holidays/traditions in your home country, and making words from dry spaghetti.

### Sample Fifty Minute Lesson plan

Time	Activity	Students	ALT	JTEs
15 mins	Review colors using pics of different colored objects.	Quiz each other about the pics.	Helps understanding and prompts students.	Help students, and take part in activity.
10 mins	Students chant/sing song to reinforce vocabulary.	Sing/chant.	Sing with Students.	Sing with students.
10 mins	Review songs from previous weeks.	Sing/assist	Sing/assist.	Sing/assist.
10 mins	Introduce new materials using cards.	Quiz each other.	Ask questions about cards.	Participate and help.
5 mins	Warm down activity. Read picture book With students.	Listen, ask questions, and repeat.	Read the book and help understanding.	Assist.

# Teaching English to Special Needs Students

Liz Miles

## Introduction

I believe the question most of us ask ourselves, regarding teaching English to special needs students, is "why?". Fortunately, the answer is as simple as the question. To begin with, it is an opportunity to teach English without the pressure of examinations; therefore, one can actually teach basic, communicative English (oral or otherwise) without having to sacrifice quality for quantity. Most of your students have no required English texts, therefore, as a teacher you can plan your own curriculum, teach what you want to teach. This brings me to the most important aspect of teaching English to special needs students: make it fun and easy. Though most of your students may not be proficient in their first language, this does not mean they cannot learn a second one. Given the opportunity you will find that most of your students can and will learn, as well as go so far as to use the English, even if it is just with you. In short, teaching special needs students can be a very rewarding experience. For them, English is fun, not a burden forced on them by Monbushou. That said, I recommend using this opportunity to have fun with your students and introduce them to the more interesting, i.e. more fun aspects of English.

## Diagnosis

While it is not always necessary to research what "disorder" your student(s) have, it can be helpful when creating a curriculum, as you can play off of your students' strengths and take note of where they need special attention. The following are just two disorders.

### Down Syndrome

Most of us are familiar with Down Syndrome, so I shan't go into detail about the various symptoms.

- it is easier for students with Down Syndrome to understand spoken, rather than expressive English, i.e. they have a harder time actually using English
- it is easier for them to remember vocabulary, as opposed to grammar

### Prader-Willi Syndrome

A child with PW is likely to be overweight, as they have a compulsion to overeat. They have a tendency to be sleepy and tired throughout the day. Furthermore, PW is characterized by various obsessive-compulsive symptoms, ranging from skin picking and hair pulling (their own).

- Problem Areas: Students usually have a short attention span and short-term auditory memory.
- Strengths: Students have a very good long-term memory, reading ability, and are better at understanding receptive language, i.e. it is easier for them to understand written/spoken language rather than producing their own.

That said, it is necessary to remind those reading this that these are merely guidelines and helpful hints. Even after working with your student(s) for a few weeks, you will begin to recognize their strengths and the areas that need work.

### **General Guidelines**

--Repetition: As stated earlier, there is no pressure to get a certain amount of English in during the school year. So, as a teacher you are under no pressure to teach new things every week. More than likely your students need constant repetition in order to both learn the material and to reinforce it.

--Fun: This is a great opportunity to do fun and games with your students. They aren't under any pressure and neither are you. The key is to make the classroom as nonthreatening as possible. Many of your students, who are more than likely easily frustrated, will easily "shut down" if they feel pressured.

--Size of the class: Some of us teach one student, others have bigger classes. For those of you with classes of more than one student, your students have probably their own classroom dynamic going on. The ni and san nenseis are usually seen as mentors (sempai) by the ichinenseis. Play off of the camaraderie. Use the older students, who have had more English education, to help the younger ones.

--Lesson Plans: It is recommended, though by no means necessary, to have a lesson plan for the year. But, be flexible. As already mentioned, repetition is key. Gradually build off of each week's (month's) lesson.

### **Recommendations**

Music: Songs are a great way to make the English fun and make the students feel at ease with English and make them feel as if they have accomplished something. The following is a sample "Alphabet Song" which one of my JTE's created (or saw somewhere, I'm not sure).

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN  
OPQRSTUVWXYZ and XYZ  
Happy, Happy, I'm Happy  
I can sing my ABC!

Use big sheets of paper and write the lyrics on the paper, which you can then post on the blackboard. It is also recommended that you write the katakana pronunciation underneath the English, some students may need this.

Easy English: Easy greetings are good and learnable. Most students will enjoy learning what various things are in English. Grammar itself is very difficult and perhaps unnecessary to teach. Also, body language can go very far. Gestures, such as waving hello or shaking hands help the students to learn.