

Introductions by Numbers

It's not what you say, it's the way that you say it

Level	lower-intermediate onwards
NLP focus	representational systems: auditory

Before the lesson

This activity is for groups above 20 and you will need an open space, either inside the classroom (eg moving chairs) or a space elsewhere in the school.

- 1** Get everybody up and mingling in the centre of the space.
- 2** Ask the students to get into groups of five and introduce themselves by saying their name and a couple of sentences. For example: *'Hello, my name is Simon. I live in Dijon and I love running.'*
Allow 30 seconds for these introductions.
- 3** Organise the following groups:
 - Groups of 7 – students shout their introductions.
 - Groups of 4 – they whisper their introductions.
 - Groups of 8 – they sing their introductions.
 - Groups of 3 – they speak in a low, sleepy way, yawning now and then.
- 4** Students work in pairs – give them two minutes. They do fuller introductions but this time in very sad voices.
- 5** Finally, ask students to form a big standing circle, facing inwards. They each introduce themselves in a clear, slow speaking voice.

NOTE: This exercise helps students meet each other through a rich variety of voices.

Acknowledgement: We learnt this technique from Saxon Menné.

Colours in the Room

Working in a space can increase your sense of security, if you take time to explore the space

Level	lower-intermediate onwards
NLP focus	representational systems: visual

- 1** Ask students to walk round the room in silence and make a written list of all the colours they can see, describing them as accurately as possible.
- 2** Students note only the colours of the room itself and things that belong there, not each other's clothes, bags, etc. (There is a wide range of colours in almost any room you teach in – the ceiling, window-frames, door hinges, skirting boards and sockets are usually different colours.)
- 3** Bring the students together to compare their lists. Often they will not have the vocabulary they need. You should take this opportunity to teach colour combinations, eg *greenish grey, jet-black, off-white*.

Variation

Instead of asking people to go round the room listing colours, ask them to list one of the following:

- corners, angles, straight lines and curves
- shapes
- the resonance of surfaces and objects
- the feel to the hand of different surfaces.

Remember My Name

Making a memorable first impression

Level	intermediate onwards
NLP focus	representational systems: visual and auditory

- 1** Explain that students are going to teach each other their first names. Ask them each to think of five things that are memorable about their own name, eg *the meaning of their name; the sound; the spelling; why their name was chosen; an anecdote in which their name is important.*
- 2** Divide the class into groups of 10–12 people. Each student teaches his/her name in turn.
- 3** At the end of this process, students write all the names that they have remembered and what made each name memorable.
- 4** When everybody is finished, regroup and have students explain which names they have remembered and how they did it. For example: They remembered best because of something they saw, heard or felt about the name. Or they remembered best because of the way the person presented their name. If so, how?
- 5** Discuss whether students feel there is a similarity between how they learnt the names and the way they generally like to learn new words in English or in their own language.

NOTE: This activity allows each person to ‘teach’ for a few minutes and allows the others to think about how they like learning.

A Country I Like

Go abroad without ever leaving the classroom

Level	lower intermediate onwards
NLP focus	logical levels: beliefs and values

Before the lesson

On large pieces of paper, draw the outlines of seven to ten countries that students will know something about. Put these up round the walls of the classroom.

- 1** Ask students to check that they can name each country, the nationality(ies) of people who live there and the language(s) spoken.
- 2** Students go and stand by the country they like most, using any criteria they choose.
- 3** All groups then gather round the same map and talk about things they like about that country.
- 4** Remove the two maps that have most students round them. Ask these students to make a second choice and move to the appropriate map. They then explain their second choice to the people for whom this place was a second choice.
- 5** Discuss the different criteria that students have used for making their choices, eg the language, the people, the food, the geography, the history, experiences they have had there, things they have heard about or seen ... or other factors?

NOTE: In making their choice of country, people project a part of their belief system. Talking about this therefore allows you and them to interact in a more interesting way.

Variation

We have also used pictures of meals in this activity. With a suitable class you could use photos of footballers, actors, pop stars, etc.

Acknowledgement: We learnt this technique at a seminar at the Living Language Department of the University of Leuven, in Belgium.