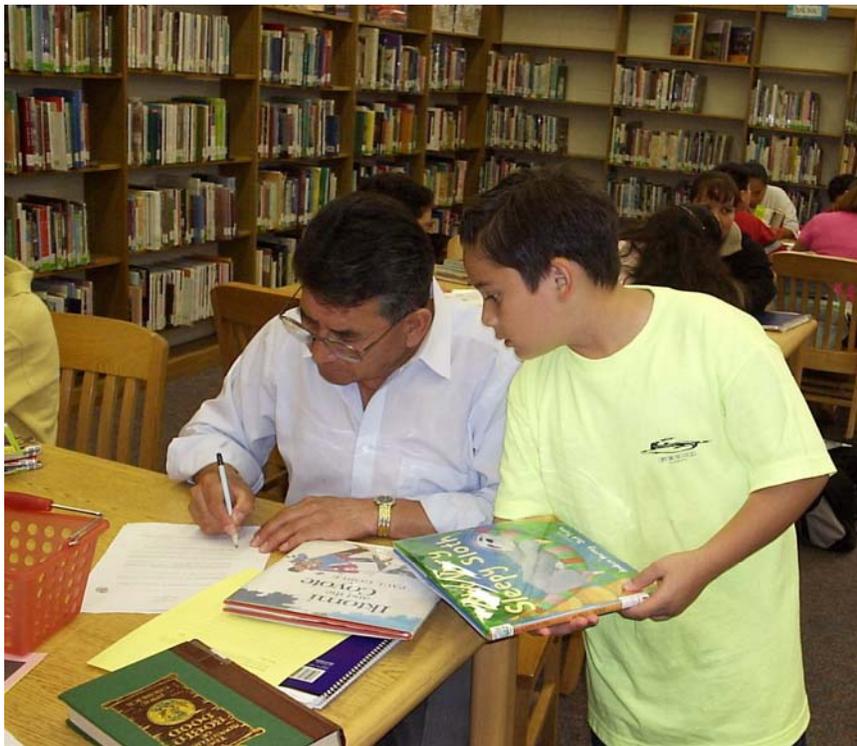


ENGLISH BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: Community-Based Tasks for ESL Students



Created by
The LEAF Program
Asian Human Services



Acknowledgements

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The Stevens Amendment of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act 1998 mandates that issuing statements, press releases, bid solicitations, and other documents describing projects or programs funded in whole or in part with federal money, all grantees receiving federal funds, including but not limited to local and state governments, shall clearly state the following in accordance with the Stevens Amendment: (1) the percentage of the total cost of the project or program which will be financed with federal money and (2) the dollar amount of federal funds for the project or program.

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Introduction

Learning English

What does it mean to “learn” an English lesson in an adult education class? Is it that the student can perform well on a standardized test, or complete an activity in the classroom with some ease? Has a student “learned” the English if he or she can accurately reproduce it within the confines of that instructional room? We like to think we’ve done enough if we’ve done that much; if our teaching skills, experience and creativity have resulted in progress that is measured inside - and only inside - the classroom. However, if the goal of the English as a Second Language class is to make its students better able to function in an English-speaking environment, then such progress as this may not be adequate, even if the teaching is. If ESL students have not truly learned English until they can reproduce it in a wide variety of situations - as native speakers can - then perhaps methods are called for which put our students into these situations, which allow them to think on their feet and make their mistakes and, over time, gain in confidence and ability. That is the aim of this text: to help lead the adult immigrant with limited English skills out of the classroom and into the community.

Language learners need real language experiences. The explanation, role play, repetition, and testing that take place in the classroom can prepare a student very well for these experiences, but nothing can substitute for the real-life communication in a foreign language, which language is only a part of. Consider the young immigrant mother who has memorized the words and phrases one uses at a pharmacy, and with other students practiced asking a pharmacist for advice, but when she actually goes to the pharmacy, her self-consciousness and nerves wipe her memory clean, and communication breaks down. The job-seeker talking to the interviewer; the parent talking to the teacher; the apartment-dweller talking to the landlord: in these and many other scenarios, it is not just language that presents a barrier, but also social and economic status, fear of failure, etc. Ultimately, these barriers can only be overcome through experience, and not through simulations, however valuable that practice is.

There are two factors, then, that are necessary for an immigrant to be able to get along in an English-speaking environment, namely language and self-assurance in using it, and we tend to think that the latter is not the

instructor's responsibility. If it were stress or fear that caused a breakdown in communication between, say, the immigrant mother and the doctor, we would hardly be willing to fault the ESL teacher for that. And yet, if students lack the confidence to put their English to good use, how will they benefit from even the very best language instruction? If an ESL program provides only half the tools that are needed to break down the wall between the immigrant and the English-speaking community, where will the other tools come from? The most resourceful immigrants will find ways to scale that wall or get around it, but for the majority of our students, that wall looms large, and English alone will not hoist them over it.

Real language experiences, repeated frequently, can foster self-assurance in ESL students. Most students who are willing to approach different kinds of native-English speakers in different situations will gradually find it easier to make themselves understood and to understand others. They will discover language patterns that are used over and over, and also unique language usage that they would not learn elsewhere. Through real language experiences, immigrants can make strides toward the self-sufficiency in communication that eludes many of them. How, then, can adult education programs provide these experiences? How can instructors in the ESL profession, many of whom are part-time staff, overworked and underpaid, and teaching large classes of students with widely ranging skills, possibly develop a systematic approach for getting into the community students who are themselves overworked, who have families and homes to care for, jobs to hold down, and fear to overcome? Students in adult education are frequently harried; the demands of their lives oblige them to come to class late, leave early, and often miss the class entirely. In these circumstances, one might ask, how could we load instructor and student alike with a heavier burden on their time, and ask more of those who may be at their giving limit?

Community-based assignments

The materials to be presented in the following pages strive not to increase the workload of teacher or student, but to offer a learning alternative that will increase students' ability to function in the world they live in. The tasks that are asked of students in these pages may seem daunting to them - but not because they are necessarily time-consuming or complex. Indeed, in this curriculum, we have attempted to create

assignments that are characterized by simplicity and straightforwardness, and while they do require time outside of class, it may not be any more time than is required to do a typical amount of homework over the course of a week. At the heart of this curriculum is the community-based assignment; this is a worksheet, no more than two pages in length, that gives students instructions to complete an activity outside of class. If these assignments are given to students about once a week, it should take them no more than a couple of hours at most to complete the task, and often much less time. For example, students might be asked to visit their local library, ask certain questions about the services provided, fill out an application for a library card and/or take out books. They would have the better part of a week, including a weekend, to do the assignment, and a good part of class time would be taken up in preparing for the activity or discussing it afterwards..

Community-based assignments offer a way to broaden the student's experience in the community, and at the same time to provide support as he or she ventures into unfamiliar territory. The ones that we have created for this curriculum attempt to find a balance between nudging students outward and preparing them for the challenge. A host of objections may arise, however, from teachers faced with such assignments: "Our ESL classes don't meet every day"; "Our students are too low-level"; "They don't have time...transportation...interest...." "It doesn't fit into our curriculum." Every adult education program is different, and every one has its own methods of instruction, schedule, student population, etc., but all adult education programs share a common goal, which is to expand the horizon of their learners; and ultimately, those horizons exist outside of the class. The community-based assignments in this curriculum are malleable; they may be changed, made central to a syllabus or placed in a supporting role, used in sequence or plucked according to some other order. Ideally, they would become mere models from which instructors would create their own activities. Our intention is not to create a scripted lesson plan from which there is no variance, but to offer learning materials that can, if necessary, be fashioned to meet the needs of each adult education provider.

Student Participation

"Students won't be motivated to go out and do these activities." This is perhaps the most legitimate objection to be made to such a proposal as ours. If many students are already hesitant to apply the English they are

learning, how can an instructor oblige them to complete assignments they may reluctant to try, without alienating them and perhaps even seeing them disappear from the class? Teachers can require that homework be done as a condition of belonging to a class, but assigning this kind of homework may seem too challenging a demand to make on some students, especially at first. Indeed, our own goal has been to get good, rather than total, participation, knowing well that our best efforts will feel like defeat if we aim for 100% student involvement; and knowing also that if we can significantly expand the horizons of some of our students, that will count as success. What follows are a few methods we have used to increase student participation; undoubtedly, other teachers and programs will have methods of their own that work just as well. We have:

- Surveyed students to find out what kinds of activities they would like to do in the community. (We have included several of our surveys at the end of this curriculum.)
- Encouraged students who have completed community-based tasks to talk about their experiences in class, as a way of making the activities seem less fearsome to hesitant students
- Used class time to let students complete some of the activities
- For some of the activities, especially at first, sent students in pairs
- Increased the difficulty of tasks gradually, to allow students time to get accustomed to doing community-based activities
- Prepared students well in class, through a variety of exercises, so that they understood the assignment and had time to practice it

Most of these suggestions will be rather obvious to ESL teachers who have encountered low student participation and tried to improve it. The reluctance of some students to "risk" stepping outside familiar territory will always be an obstacle for instructors to contend with, and perhaps the best strategy of all is for teachers to remain committed to the principle that students should be involved in the community, and to continue working toward that end.

Barth Landor
Asian Human Services

A Note on the Use of This Text

Some of the activities in this volume are meant more as models than as ready-to-use assignments. We have tried to create generic tasks, but in certain instances, specific place names have been necessary to include, and so the format presented would work only for students in our area - the Uptown neighborhood of Chicago. Also, our computer tasks rely on particular website designs which could change over time. We encourage teachers to adapt materials as they see fit, and also to try out any computer and telephone activities in advance. Perhaps more importantly, we encourage teachers to look at the environment in which their own students live and work, and to create new community-based activities that are tailored to this environment.

Unit One: Finding Your Way Around

1. Asking for Walking Directions
2. Asking for Directions on Public Transportation
3. Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt
4. Calling an Airline
5. Computer Task: Using "Mapquest" to Find Directions

1. ASKING for WALKING DIRECTIONS

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Students must practice the necessary skill of asking directions. This activity gives them a low-risk way to practice.

PREPARATION: Students will need to practice the language associated with giving directions in order to comprehend the answer. Depending on the level of the class, the teacher can teach relatively simple directions for places nearby or more complicated directions for further distances. The class can practice using a simple map of the neighborhood or the class can go outside and walk around the neighborhood, asking and giving each other directions.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Students can do this during class time if possible. This way, they can do it in pairs with weaker students paired with more confident students. After they have successfully practiced during class time, the assignment can be given for homework to be done in a different location.

This activity can be used to build students' confidence in asking the directions because it is low-risk; that is, even if they don't understand the answer completely, they can simply reply, "OK, thank you." More advanced students can be encouraged to repeat the directions back.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Turn right/left. / Make a right/left.
- Go straight.
- Block(s)
- It's on the right/left.
- Excuse me

Community Activity
Asking for walking directions

NAME _____

Task: Ask 2 people for directions. Do not ask your classmates! This practice must be done outside of class.

Example questions: Excuse me, where is the post office?
Excuse me, could you tell me where the bus stop is?
Excuse me, is there a McDonald's near here?

1. What question did you ask the 1st person?

2. Did you understand the answer? YES NO

3. What did he / she say? Write what you heard here:

4. What question did you ask the 2nd person?

5. Did you understand the answer? YES NO

6. What did he / she say? Write what you heard here:

After the activity:

1. Tell the class about your experience.

2. Was this the first time you asked for directions in English? YES NO

3. Were you nervous when you asked the question? YES NO

4. Do you feel more prepared to do it again in the future?

YES NO, I need more practice

2. ASKING for DIRECTIONS on PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity allows students to practice asking for directions on the public transportation system in their city (in this case, Chicago). This is a crucial skill if the learners are to gain more independence in their new surroundings.

PREPARATION: Before going to the train station, the class should have a discussion about the public transportation in their city to determine how familiar and comfortable the students are with it. The teacher should have transit maps for the class to review. The teacher can do a variety of reading, listening, and pair/group activities using the maps. The class can work together to generate a list of questions for students to ask and places to visit.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This activity can be given as a homework assignment or it can be done during class time with the students working in pairs or small groups. In the latter case, stronger students can help weaker or more reticent students with the communication required.

Lower level students will need a lot of work with the vocabulary for giving directions before doing this activity. More advanced students can ask for more complicated directions and/or can ask additional questions such as whether bicycles are permitted on the trains.

This activity also offers the opportunity for students to learn and practice the correct pronunciation of place names (street names, station names, public buildings, etc.)

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- north, south, east, west, northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest
- right, left, straight
- Take the (red line / #36 bus) to...
- Get on/get off at...
- Transfer/change to...
- Block(s) stop(s)
- "Excuse me. Could you tell me how to get to...?"

Community Activity

Name _____

Asking for Directions on Public Transportation

Task: This is an activity to help you practice asking questions about using the CTA (Chicago Transit Authority). Please do the following things:

1. Decide on a travel destination in Chicago (examples: the John Hancock Center, Water Tower Place, Shedd Aquarium). Write your destination here:

2. What exact questions are you going to ask? Write your question(s) here:

3. Go to the CTA train station nearest you. If you are not sure where it is, we can look at a map together. If there is nobody working there, ask a customer or go to another station.

4. Ask the CTA employee or a customer your question. If you like, you can ask him or her to show you where it is on a map. Thank him or her.

After the activity:

1. Write the directions that the person gave you:

2. Did the person understand your question? YES NO

3. Do you think you could find your destination with these directions?
YES NO

4. What new words or expressions did you learn from this activity?

3. NEIGHBORHOOD SCAVENGER HUNT

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity is designed for students to familiarize themselves with their neighborhoods. It is very low risk and easy to complete. Many of the locations are useful for everyday living, such as the post office and grocery store. Others are locations that are needed in an emergency, such as the hospital and police station. It is a good idea for students to know the location and phone numbers of these places.

PREPARATION: This activity takes very little preparation. It can be incorporated into a lesson about telephone numbers and addresses or into a lesson about places in the city. Discuss where addresses are located (on the curb, above the door, on the window) before assigning this task. Prior to this activity, have a conversation about the city and the different neighborhoods that the students live in. Discuss which neighborhoods are better and why.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The students could draw a map to accompany their findings or they could go to www.mapquest.com and print out a map of their neighborhood. After the activity, the students can share their findings in small groups. Return to the conversation about which neighborhoods are better and why. Also, if the phone number is not on the window of the establishment, the students could use the phone book to locate the number.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Excuse me, what is your address/phone number? (They will probably need to ask for the phone number.)
- map vocabulary - corner, intersection, on the left/right, across from, next to, near, far

Community Activity
Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt

Name: _____

Task: Take a walk in your neighborhood and locate the following places. Record the name, address and phone number of each place. If the phone number isn't on the door or window, ask someone inside or use a phone book.

1. Library Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone number: _____

2. Post office Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone number: _____

3. Hospital Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone number: _____

4. Elementary school Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone number: _____

5. Park Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone number: _____

6. Grocery store Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone number: _____

7. Bank Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone number: _____

8. Police station Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone number: _____

After the Activity:

1. What places are far from your house? What places are near your house?
2. Did you walk inside any place to ask for a phone number?
3. What is the emergency phone number for the police station and fire station?
4. Do you go to any of these places regularly? Which ones?

New words and phrases:

4. CALLING AN AIRLINE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity is designed to give students practice speaking in English on the telephone and using an automated answering system. The automated systems can be confusing to navigate, but they are becoming commonplace when calling businesses and public services. It is the instructor's discretion whether the students use the automated system or have the students talk to an operator.

PREPARATION: This activity is a good companion to any unit on transportation and travel. Students start with discussions about travel in general and airplane travel in particular. Even students who do not have imminent travel plans enjoy talking about travel and visiting their home countries.

Prior to making the phone call, it is necessary for the students to come up with a destination (city and country or state), a departure date, and a return date. Students should be prepared with questions 1-6 before calling. The teacher should make one or more practice calls before giving the assignment to the students to be able to teach common, useful phrases to the students. These phrases can be practiced in the form of role-plays, dialogue writing, and/or listening activities. Finally, it is important for the teacher to also teach the students how to politely decline buying tickets.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Students can be extremely nervous about making phone calls. The braver students often can give the more reticent students encouragement by reporting their results (even if they had problems.)

Students who do not have access to a phone or who had problems making/understanding the call could make the call from school with the teacher or another student using the same line or using a speaker phone.

Students can follow up this activity by going to the airline website and then comparing the prices there with the ones from the automated service.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Arrival/departure
- one-way/roundtrip
- fare/airfare
- non-stop/direct/layover
- press "1", "2", star/pound
- Make a reservation.

Telephone Activity
Calling an Airline

NAME _____

Task: Call an airline and speak to an agent to find information about airfares.

Requesting airfare information:

I'd like fare information. / I want to find out a ticket price.

I'm leaving from (Chicago) on (date) and I'm traveling to (. . .) on (date).

I'd like to leave in the morning / afternoon / evening.

Asking about making a reservation:

Would you like to reserve a ticket? Could I make a reservation for you?

Would you like me to hold this for you?

Politely declining:

No thank you. I'm just checking prices right now.

No thanks. I'm not ready to make a reservation yet.

No thank you. I'll call back another time.

1. Write the name of a travel destination here. It can be a U.S. or international city. _____
2. What date do you want to leave? _____
3. What time of day do you want to leave? (morning, afternoon, evening)
4. What date do you want to return? _____
5. What time of day do you want to return? (morning, afternoon, evening)
6. How many people will be traveling? _____

7. Choose an airline from below. Call the airline and find the fare for the dates that you want to travel.

American 1-800-433-7300

Delta 1-800-221-1212

America West 1-800-235-9292

Northwest 1-800-225-2525

Continental 1-800-231-0856

United 1-800-241-6522

US Airways 1-800-428-4322

Other: _____

8. How much is the airfare per person? \$ _____

After the activity:

1. Was it difficult to understand the automated message when you called?
2. Did you have to call more than one time?
3. Was it difficult to communicate with the agent?
4. What words or phrases did you need to repeat to the agent?
5. Do you feel prepared to do this by yourself in the future?

5. USING MAPQUEST TO FIND DIRECTIONS

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: It was not so long ago that map-reading skills were necessary to anyone unfamiliar with their surroundings. Now we can quickly find directions using the computer, especially if we are driving. Mapquest is the best-known website to find out how to get from one place to the next, and also to find out distances and travel times. The purpose of this exercise is to introduce students to this relatively new, fairly easy method for getting directions.

PREPARATIONS: Before students sit down at the computer, have them do exercises that replicate the Mapquest format. This could include writing out directions from their house to their learning center ("Turn right on Maple, go two blocks to Elm", etc.). They could even estimate at the end of the directions the time it takes to drive or walk, and the distance.

Also, give them a set of directions from Mapquest itself - not the ones they will be entering - so that they can see what the format looks like, and how to enter information on the computer screen.

In class, have the students write down names of businesses and addresses that they know - fellow classmates', local offices, etc. It will help them to come furnished to the computer lab with a list of addresses they can use.

RECOMMENDATIONS: To personalize this more, have the students come up with different locations in the city. Also, have them bring in addresses of their place of employment, a long distance relative, or a place that they want to visit. This is a low level, low stress activity and a great way to introduce the students to the Internet. If the students wrote directions before completing this activity, compare the two sets of directions.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- homepage
- destination
- zoom in/out

Computer Task

Name: _____

Using Mapquest to Find Directions

Task: It is easy to get directions on the Internet. You can get directions for long trips (from Chicago to Boston, for example) or for short trips. You can even find out how to get from your house to another place.

Part One: Follow the directions below to see how to get from Wrigley Field, where the Chicago Cubs play, to Soldier Field, where the Chicago Bears play.

1. Type in <http://mapquest.com>
2. In the upper right corner, click "Directions".
3. Enter the starting address: 1060 W. Addison, Chicago, IL 60613 (This is the address of Wrigley Field.)
4. Enter the destination address: 1600 S. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60616 (This is the address of Soldier Field).
5. Click "Get Directions" (Sometimes there is a mistake. Follow the instructions next to the exclamation (!) to find your mistake.)
6. How many miles is it from Wrigley Field to Soldier Field?
7. If you drive, how long will it take you?

Part Two: Get directions from your house to a classmate's house.

1. Go back to the Mapquest homepage.
2. In the upper right hand corner, click "Directions".
3. Type in your address, including city, state and zip code.
4. Type in the address of a classmate. Put the city and state.
5. How many miles is it to this destination?
6. How long will it take you to get there?

Part Three: Mapquest also allows you to get maps. Follow the instructions.

1. Go back to the Mapquest homepage.
2. Click on Maps (the orange globe on the top of the screen).
3. Practice getting maps by putting in the addresses you typed in earlier. For example, put in the address for Wrigley Field, and get the map. Then, put in the address for your house and get the map.
4. Practice "zoom in" and "zoom out". This lets you see bigger or smaller scaled maps.

Unit Two: Public Services

1. Library Scavenger Hunt
2. Important Phone Numbers
3. Visiting the Post Office
4. Calling the Toll-free Post Office number
5. Computer Task: Secretary of State Driver Facilities

1. LIBRARY SCAVENGER HUNT

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity is designed to get the students familiar with their local library and the services it has to offer.

PREPARATION: The teacher should prepare the students for a trip to the library by discussing where the nearest library is, what services are offered, who goes to the library and how often, etc.

Teachers should find out how many students have library cards and encourage all students to get cards. Tell students to bring the proper ID with them to the library if they are to get their library cards.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Going to the library makes a good class trip, but this could also be given as a homework assignment. In Chicago, we took our students to the main library, the Harold Washington Library, which many students were not familiar with. The students could be given the assignment again to do at their branch library.

More advanced students could be given a lesson in locating a book in the library by using the catalog system. An alternative activity is to schedule a guided tour of the library.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- library card
- due date
- library branch
- fine
- borrow/lend
- catalog
- check-out/return
- shelf/shelves
- "Excuse me. Where is/are the...?"
- Prepositions of location: next to, in the back, in the front, near, behind, in the corner
- Ordinal numbers: 1st floor, 2nd floor, etc.

Community Activity
Library Scavenger Hunt

NAME _____

1. Find the following items in the library. If you cannot locate something, ask the librarian.

THINGS TO FIND	DID YOU FIND IT?
Videos/DVDs	YES ___ NO ___
Internet access	YES ___ NO ___
Books in your native language	YES ___ NO ___
ESL books	YES ___ NO ___
Children's books	YES ___ NO ___
Newspapers in English	YES ___ NO ___
Music CD's	YES ___ NO ___
Copy machine	YES ___ NO ___
Books on tape	YES ___ NO ___
Telephone books	YES ___ NO ___
Check-out desk	YES ___ NO ___

2. Pick up the following items while you are at the library and bring them back to class.

- a) map of the library
- b) children's story time schedule
- c) special events calendar

3. Answer these questions:

- a) How many books can I borrow?
- b) How long can I borrow a book?
- c) What is the fine for a late book?
- d) Are videos and DVD's free?
- e) How long can I borrow a video or DVD?
- f) What is the fine for a late video or DVD?
- g) How many computers with Internet access are there?
- h) Is there a time limit for Internet use?
- i) What are the library's hours?

4. If you have a library card today, check out a book.

5. What is the name of the book(s)? _____

6. Why did you choose this book? _____

After the activity:

1. Share your answers with your classmates.
2. What new information did you learn about the library?

2. IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Knowing important telephone numbers, including emergency numbers, is vital for ESL students, and indeed, for all families. Collecting contact information for doctors, schools, babysitters, etc., and keeping them in a prominent place in the home can save families time and trouble.

PREPARATION: This activity works well as part of a child safety unit in a family literacy class. Students first brainstorm what phone numbers are important to have on hand in the home. Then they discuss ways of gathering these numbers. Teachers can bring copies of the local phone directory to class to show and to use. This is a good activity for teaching how to use the phone directory for those students not familiar with it. This requires the skill of alphabetizing.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This activity can be done in class, with students using the phone directories in pairs, or it can be done as homework. When the forms are completed, students are advised to put them on the refrigerator or near the telephone at home. The students can write dialogues and practice role-plays of making telephone calls, especially emergency ones.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- area code
- numbers 1-10
- yellow pages/white pages
- emergency/non-emergency
- 411 (number for information)

Community Activity

Name: _____

Important Phone Numbers

Name	Telephone Number
My child's school:	
My child's doctor:	
My child's dentist:	
My school:	
Police Emergency:	
Police Non-Emergency:	
Fire Department - Emergency:	
Fire Department- Non Emergency:	
Poison Control Center:	
Electric Company:	
Telephone Company:	
Gas Company:	

3. VISITING THE POST OFFICE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity is designed primarily to encourage the students to locate and use their neighborhood post office. A change of address form is one of the many services that the post office offers. Possibly, the students will learn of other services the post office can provide while picking up this form. This can be used with very low-level students since there is no speaking required.

PREPARATION: Have the students complete simple forms that include their name and personal information. Bring a change of address form to class so the students know what it looks like. Have a discussion about what types of services the post office can provide and the location of main offices. Discuss prices of stamps, packages, and ways they use the post office here and in their native country. Have students practice addressing envelopes so that they know how to do so correctly.

RECOMMENDATIONS: For low-level students, have them pick up the form and fill in their name and address. For extremely low-level students, go to the post office as a class. For higher-level students, have them ask a question about mailing a package or letter to their native country in addition to asking for the form. If the class has computer time, this activity may be completed via the Internet.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- name - first, last, maiden, middle
- address - current, new, previous
- street name, number, city, state, zip code
- abbreviations - apt, st, zip, #
- signature

Community Activity
Visiting the Post Office

Name: _____

Task: Go to the post office and pick up a change of address form. Fill it out, put it in an envelope and mail it to the teacher.

1. Go to the post office near the school or near your home. There is a counter with many different forms. Pick up a change of address form.
2. Fill out the form. Fill in your name and old mailing address. Use your current address. You do not need to put a new mailing address.
3. Put the change of address form in an envelope. Mail it to the school address. Don't forget to put a return address and stamp on the envelope.

Name of Teacher
Address of Learning Center
Town, State, Zip Code

4. Mail the envelope to the teacher.

After the Activity:

1. What other forms are at the post office?
2. When do you use a change of address form?
3. What other things are in the change of address envelope?

4. CALLING THE TOLL-FREE POST OFFICE NUMBER

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Automated voice systems are a good way for students to get used to making telephone calls - and toll-free calls allow students to make calls without seeing their phone bill go up. We are accustomed to a certain "automated language" in making these calls, and students learning English should also become familiar with these words and phrases (see "useful language" below). So the purpose of this activity is to get our students used to the practice of making automated calls, and also to gather useful information for mailing letters.

PREPARATION: If possible, get a recording of a "conversation" that involves an automated system. If one is not available, create a transcript based on such a call. Have students read through - or listen to - this conversation several times, to become familiar with the response pattern.

Call the toll-free postal service number, and write down the categories of information that they provide (one of them is "Zip Codes", which is the basis of this exercise.) Review the different categories with them, so that even if they don't "Press or Say Mailing Rates", for example, they will have more confidence with the vocabulary when they are listening.

Encourage the students to make the call several times. Toll-free automated calls are truly risk-free!

RECOMMENDATION: This activity can also be completed using the USPS website (www.usps.com). Both the automated system and the website are good for low level students. There are many activities on both, such as locating a post office in a particular zip code or changing your address.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- touch-tone
- voice-activated system
- toll-free
- automated system
- "To Continue in English..."
- "Press or Say..."
- "Please select from the following options"

Telephone Activity

Name: _____

Calling The Toll-free Post Office number

Task: Call the United States Post Office's toll-free number. This is an automated system, so no one will answer the phone. Speak clearly into the phone in order to find out information. The goal for this activity will be to get the zip code for an address.

1. Write down the name of an address you are familiar with in the United States. You can write down your own address, or another one.
2. Practice saying this address a couple of times. Speak clearly!
3. On your touch-tone phone, dial 1-800-275-8777 (1-800-ASK USPS)
4. The recording you hear will give you instructions. The first one will be to "Press or Say 1" to continue in English. Make sure you press or say 1!
5. Listen to the message and follow the instructions. Give the state name, the city name, and the address you would like.
6. When the voice asks "Correct?" make sure you say "Yes" or "No". Be sure to speak loudly and clearly.

What is the address you asked about?

What is the zip code that you heard?

After the activity:

1. Have you ever used a voice-activated system like this one before? Can you remember when?
2. Did you understand the voice when she was speaking?
3. Did you find this activity easy to do, or difficult?

5. SECRETARY OF STATE DRIVER FACILITIES

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity introduces students to the Illinois Secretary of State's website, and in particular to information about driver facilities statewide. It's useful for any student who is eligible to drive in the state. Because of the potential consequences of not following the rules of the road, this exercise may be important in educating students about requirements and services provided by the Illinois Secretary of State.

PREPARATION: Ask students about driving rules and customs in their native countries. How do their laws differ from ours? Find out what they know about driving requirements in Illinois. How often do drivers have to renew their licenses? If drivers get speeding tickets, what can they do to get the tickets off their records? Can you own a car in this state without insurance?

For many of our students, these questions may be sensitive ones. Teachers should encourage students to be well-informed about the driving laws of the state they live in, whether or not they have all the same driving rights as legal residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This exercise is a good one for students at intermediate to advanced levels. The teacher could get a driver's manual and discuss sections of it as a class. The students could take a practice written test in class or on-line. Also, the teacher could suggest driving school's for the students. It is also suggested to discuss the consequences of driving without a license, which is a common practice among immigrants.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Motorist
- Vehicle
- Renewal
- Facility
- Organ donor registry

Computer Activity
Secretary of State Driver Facilities

Name: _____

Task: Go to the Illinois Secretary of State's website, and find out information about requirements for driver's licenses, the driver facility nearest you, and the hours of operation

1. Go to www.cyberdriveillinois.com
2. Click on "Services" on the top of the screen
3. Click on "Services for Motorists"
4. Scroll down until you come to "New to Illinois Driving" and click.
5. Click on "Quick Facility Checklist"

6. Write down the five requirements for drivers 18 years and older to get a license.
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)

- 7) Find the driver facility closest to you. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on "Find Your Nearest Facility".
- 8) Click on the area of Illinois that you live in to find the closest branch.
- 9) Then, click the town, or part of town, that you live in.

10) What is the address of this branch?

11) What are the hours of operation?

12) Look at the services available at your driver facility (located on the right side), and circle "True" or "False" next to the question below.

At your driver facility, you can:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------|-------|
| a) Buy a car | True | False |
| b) Register to vote | True | False |
| c) Renew your license | True | False |
| d) Register to donate organs | True | False |
| e) Get your car fixed | True | False |

13) Click on "Basic Fees", located on the right side of the screen.

14) What is the cost of the following:

- a) a basic driver's license:
- b) a five-year identification card, issued after 1/1/05:
- c) an original vehicle title:
- d) the renewal fee for Standard License Plates (Passenger):

Unit Three: Retail Services

1. Business Hours
2. Department Store Scavenger Hunt
3. Grocery Store Scavenger Hunt
4. Calling Local Businesses I (Listening Task)
5. Calling Local Businesses II (Speaking Task)
6. Computer Task: Searching for Retail Items Online

1. BUSINESS HOURS

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity is designed to familiarize the students with the neighborhood near the school, practice time and addresses, and improve their map skills. It can be used with a low level class. There is a space to insert a map of the neighborhood. This simple map should have the businesses that the students need to visit marked clearly.

PREPARATION: The students should be familiar with time and the abbreviations for the days of the week. Before assigning the task, the teacher can bring in example signs from stores, or the class can visit some stores next to the school together. The teacher should visit the stores before sending the students to ensure the hours are posted.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This community activity is only an example and will need to be modified for an individual class in regards to the level of the students and the location of the school. For very low level students, this activity can be completed as a class or in pairs. The teacher may choose to only use questions regarding the address and/or the hours of operation. Another option is to ask one question for each business. It is not necessary for the students to find all of the information for every business.

For higher level students, send half of the students to several stores on the map and send the other half of the students to different stores. When they return with their information, the students can share what they found.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- abbreviations for days of the week
- am and pm
- closed

Community Activity
Business Hours

Name _____

Task: Go to stores in the neighborhood that are marked on the map and answer the following questions for each business on the map.

Insert local map here

For each business you visit, answer the following questions:

1. What is the name of the business? _____
2. What is the address? _____
3. What does this business sell? _____
4. What are the hours of operation? _____
5. Are there any sales or special prices? If yes, explain.

After the Activity

1. Are all the stores open on the weekends? If not, which ones are closed on the weekends?

2. Did you go into any stores? If yes, what questions did you ask?

2. DEPARTMENT STORE SCAVENGER HUNT

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity is designed to give students an opportunity to ask typical questions and read prices when shopping for items in a department store.

PREPARATION: Find a department store that is convenient to take a class trip to. In our program, we took a trip to Sears, but this could be done at any department store or discount store, such as Target or WalMart. The teacher may alter or introduce this activity according to the particular store. For example, the store may have multiple floors or just different departments. In a smaller store, the location of an item may be discussed in terms of what aisle it is in. The questions ask "where is/are . . ." which may be interpreted as what floor, what department, what aisle, or where in the store (back/front of store, next to some department). The teacher needs to make this clear before sending the students to the store.

This activity can accompany a unit on prices, clothing, and/or furniture and appliances. Students should practice this vocabulary before the trip. Teachers can also bring in store flyers for a variety of reading and vocabulary activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The activity is designed to be done as a class trip with students working in pairs or small groups. However, it could be modified to have students do it for homework. This is a good low-level activity.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Excuse me, where is the shoe department?
- Excuse me, where are the ties?
- How much is/are...?
- This/that/these/those
- Prices
- Sizes
- It's/They're too big/too small...

Community Activity
Department Store Scavenger Hunt

NAMES: _____

Task: Work with a partner. Find the information.

1. How many floors are there in the store? _____

2. Where are the children's pajamas? _____

Are the pajamas on sale? YES NO

How much are they? \$_____

3. Where are the women's sunglasses? _____

Are the sunglasses on sale? YES NO

How much are they? \$_____

4. Where are the men's watches? _____

Are the watches on sale? YES NO

How much are they? \$_____

5. Where is the shoe department? _____

Find some shoes that you like. Try on the shoes. Ask for your size.

Do the shoes fit? YES NO Are they comfortable? YES NO

How much are they? \$_____

6. Where are the bath towels? _____

What is the price range? From \$_____ to \$_____

7. Where are the lamps? _____

What is the price range? From \$_____ to \$_____

8. Where are the babies' cribs? _____

What is the price range? From \$_____ to \$_____

After the activity:

1. Did you try anything on? Did you buy anything?

2. Did you understand the person you talked to? Did you ask them to repeat themselves?

3. GROCERY STORE SCAVENGER HUNT

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Grocery shopping is part of everyone's daily life. The students must know where to find things in the store and be able to ask for something that they can't find. They will practice food names, containers and quantities of food (bottle, bag, bunch), and grocery store organization. Also, it is helpful to everyone to find out which store is cheaper.

PREPARATION: This activity can supplement a unit on food, quantities and containers, or count/noncount nouns. The teacher should visit two different grocery stores and find each item on the list, making sure the brand and quantity is available. Discuss the organization of the grocery store and phrases to ask for help.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Go to the store at an hour when the store will not be extremely busy. For lower level students, split the class in half and send them to two local stores. Give them a list with common items. For higher level students, they can take this list to the grocery store they use and complete the list themselves. Have the students bring the prices to class and discuss prices with another student. For lower levels, keep the list simple. For more advanced students, include some obscure items which would require the students to ask an employee for help.

Extension activities:

- Have the students purchase certain ingredients, and then make a simple dish to share with other classes, for example, a spinach dip.
- Bring sales circulars or coupons to class to read, and then have students find the items.
- Read nutrition labels as a class activity, and then have students buy two similar items and compare the nutrition information.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Excuse me, where is the . . . ?
- aisle, shelf
- top, bottom, left, right, center
- carton, roll, stick, head, bunch, slice
- lb = pound, oz = ounce

Community Activity
Grocery Store Scavenger Hunt

Name _____

Task: This activity will compare the prices at two different stores, and help you discover which one is cheaper. Your teacher will divide you into two groups. One group will go to one store. The second group will go to a different store. With a partner, look for the following products and write down the prices.

When you finish writing down prices, go to page two, and circle the services that the store offers. When you return to class, sit with a classmate that went to the opposite store and share the information that you found.

PRODUCT	Store #1	Store #2
turkey breast - 1 lb.		
american cheese - 1 lb		
bunch of broccoli		
head of lettuce		
potatoes - 5 lb. Bag		
boneless chicken breast - 1 lb.		
ground beef - 1 lb		
bag of sugar		
box of Cheerios		
Folger's coffee - 11.5 oz can		
white rice - 10 lb		
can of Del Monte corn		
Bounty paper towels		
roll of Reynold's aluminum foil		
bag of Ruffles potato chips		
carton of eggs - dozen		
Imperial butter - 4 sticks		
Tony's frozen pizza		
Kraft cheese - 16 slices		

Services at a Grocery Store

Most large supermarkets have services for the customers in addition to food shopping. Look around the store for the following. Circle the services you find.

- a. plastic bag recycling
- b. blood pressure machines
- c. pharmacy
- d. florist
- e. stamps
- f. bank services
- g. change machine
- h. photo development
- i. other _____

After the Activity:

1. Overall, which store is cheaper?
2. Did you have any problems finding a product? If yes, which one?
3. Did you speak English to anyone on your trip? If yes, to whom?

4. CALLING LOCAL BUSINESSES I (Listening Task) **Notes for Teachers**

PURPOSE: This is a telephone activity designed to help the students practice time and days of the week. The locations chosen all have recordings of their store hours. This activity requires no speaking skills, so it is very low risk. The students may call numerous times to listen for the information.

PREPARATION: This activity can be used when discussing time, days of the week, and simple present tense. To prepare, the teacher should call the establishments first to find out the options that exist so they can be discussed with the students. Before assigning this task, the teacher can bring in recordings of telephone conversations so the students can practice listening for specific information. It should be stressed that it is not necessary to understand every word of the recording. The students should have mastered time and days of the week before assigning this activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS: If there is a phone at the school, encourage students to call during break time or after class. If the students are hesitant to call, use a speaker phone at the school. The teacher can listen with the student and help him/her listen for particular information. Discuss the students' experiences and problems. For lower level students, the teacher can choose locations that do not offer many options (for this, press 1 . . .) For higher levels, the call can be more complicated, such as calling a theater for movie times. If the class has access to computers, this activity may be completed via the Internet.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- days of the week
- through (Monday through Friday)
- weekend
- hours of operation
- press 1/2/0/ pound (#)/star (*)
- options

Telephone Activity
Listening for Hours of Operation

Name: _____

Task: Call businesses and write their hours of operation. If you do not understand the message, call the number again. Continue to call until you understand the information.

1. Call Sears. The phone number is 312-373-6000. Press 1.
 - a) What time is Sears open today? _____
 - b) What time is Sears open tomorrow? _____
 - c) What is the Internet address for Sears? _____
 - d) How many times did you call the number? _____

2. Call Art Institute of Chicago. The number is 312-443-3600. Press 2. Press 1.
 - a) What do I do if I want directions? _____
 - b) What time is the museum open on Tuesday? _____
 - c) What are the museum's hours on the weekends? _____
 - d) What days are the museum closed? _____

3. Call Marshall Field's. The number is 312-781-1000. Press 1.
 - a) What do I do if I want a job? _____
 - b) What time is the store open on Tuesday? _____
 - c) What days are the sale? _____
 - d) Where is Marshall Field's located? _____

After the Activity:

1. Did you need to call the numbers more than one time?
2. What were some options the recording gave?
3. For any of these places, can you talk to an operator if you want?

5. CALLING LOCAL BUSINESSES II (Speaking Task)

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity is designed to give the student more confidence in using the telephone. It is more high risk than listening to recorded information, but it is very controlled conversation. The focus of this activity is inquiring about business hours.

PREPARATION: The students practice conversations in pairs during class. These exercises should prepare the students to make the calls. Since this is not a recording, but a live person, the students should be prepared for a variety of responses. Have the students listen to several recorded conversations. Also, if they can't understand the operator, they should politely say "Thank You" and hang up.

RECOMMENDATIONS: If the students need practice before trying this activity, have the students call the teacher or the school and ask a simple question. The teacher may also make the call with the students using a speaker phone.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- press 1/2/0/pound(#)/star(*)
- What time does the store open/close?
- What are the stores hours on Monday/Tuesday/?
- Can you repeat that please?
- Excuse me?

Telephone Activity
Asking about Hours of Operation

Name: _____

Task: Call the businesses and ask the operator for specific information.

1. Call Jewel-Osco. This store does not have a recording. The number is 773-784-1922.

a) What time does the store close today? _____

2. Call Kmart. This store does not have a recording. The number is 773-685-1121.

a) What time does the store close today? _____

b) What are the store hours tomorrow? _____

3. Call Home Depot. This store does not have a recording. The number is 773-463-6306.

a) What are the store hours on Sunday? _____

b) Is there a 24 hour store in the city? _____

After the Activity:

1. Was the operator difficult to understand?

2. We practiced conversations in class. Did the operator respond in the same way? Did she or he say something different?

3. How did you end the conversation?

4. New words/phrases:

6. SEARCHING FOR RETAIL INFORMATION ONLINE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: The Internet is a place to locate information, communicate with friends and family, and shop. This activity is designed to introduce the students to the Craig's list website, which is a listing of local items for sale, housing for rent, and employment, among other things. This site is basically an online classified section for large cities in the United States. The students will become more familiar with the internet and find a useful tool to buy used or new items from people in their neighborhood.

PREPARATION: This activity can be incorporated into a variety of themes, from shopping to housing. Prior to taking the class to the computer lab, the students should look at a copy of a listing from Craig's list. For lower level students, or students who are new to the internet, it is also recommended to print out the Craig's list homepage and discuss the different headings.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Because many of the contact information for the items require an e-mail, it is suggested to set up e-mail accounts prior to doing this activity. Encourage those students who are seriously looking for an item, such as a bed or children's clothes, to contact the seller. This activity can also be revised such that the students are selling their items.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- o.b.o. = or best offer
- stroller

Computer Activity

Name: _____

Searching for Retail Information Online

Task: Go to the Craigslist's Chicago website and find an item, such as furniture or a bicycle, that you want to buy. Write down the cost of the item and the contact information.

1. Go to www.chicago.craigslist.org. Under "for sale", click on "furniture". Search the listings for a sofa and read the listings for at least five sofas. Choose your favorite one and answer these questions.

- a) How much does the sofa cost? _____
- b) What is the date of the listing? _____
- c) How do you contact the seller? _____

2. Go back to the Chicago Craiglist's homepage. Under "for sale", click on "baby + kids". Search the listings for a stroller and read the listings for at least five strollers. Choose the stroller that sounds like the best offer.

- a) How much does the stroller cost? _____
- b) What is the date of the listing? _____
- c) How do you contact the seller? _____

3. Go back to the Chicago Craiglist's homepage. Choose one item that you want to search for. It could be a grill, a bike, a computer, a guitar, or a microwave. Search for whatever item that you want and answer the following questions.

- a) What item did you search for? _____
- b) How much does the item cost? _____
- c) What is the date of the listing? _____
- d) How do you contact the seller? _____
- e) Are you going to try and buy this item? Why or why not?

After the Activity:

- 1. Did you contact anyone about an item listed?

- 2. Do you think that you will use this website to purchase something in the future? Why or why not?

Unit Four: Housing

1. Classified Housing Advertisements
2. Attending an Open House
3. Computer Task: Calculating New Home Costs
4. Computer Task: Renting an Apartment Online
5. Computer Task: Comparing Cities

1. CLASSIFIED HOUSING ADVERTISEMENTS

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Finding and renting apartments is a necessary life skill. Many students rely on others to assist them in doing this, but our intermediate students can begin to learn the skills and language to do it independently. This activity introduces students to the classified ads, which are rich in useful vocabulary and abbreviations. Students also practice common questions to ask about apartments for rent.

PREPARATION: Start with general discussions about housing: "What kind of house or apartment do you live in?" "Do you like your neighborhood?" "Are you looking for a new apartment?" "How do people search for apartments?" "How does housing in this area compare to housing in your home country?"

Students can brainstorm a list of questions for inquiring about apartments: "Where is it located?" "How many bedrooms does it have?" "Does the rent include utilities?" Etc.

Teachers can ask students to bring in housing classified ads or they can bring in a stack for students to use. The class should go through some ads together before the students find their own.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Students may be reluctant to make a phone call if they are not really looking for an apartment. If they are uncomfortable making the call, they could practice in a role-play in the class or they could call the teacher or another student at home and role-play. Students who are looking for apartments should be encouraged to make the phone call, which is relatively low-risk.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- "I'm calling about the apartment that you advertised. Could you tell me...?"
- "Would you like to see the apartment?" "Are you interested in seeing the apartment?"
- "It's not exactly what I'm looking for. I'm looking for something less expensive/bigger/closer to my job..."
- "Thanks for the information. I'll get back to you if I'm interested."

Community Activity **NAME** _____
Classified Housing Advertisements

Task: Get a copy of a newspaper in your area that has housing ads, and after you find several apartments that look good, call for information.

1. Pick up a copy of the local newspaper. Find the housing classified section.

2 . Before you read, rank in order (1,2,3,4...) the importance of the following:

_____ location _____ price _____ pets allowed _____ size
 _____ heat incl. _____ floor _____ near trans. _____ other:

3. How many bedrooms do you want? _____

4. What is your price range? From \$_____ to \$_____

5. What do the following abbreviations mean?

apt _____ bldg. _____ A/C _____
 BR _____ hwfl _____ incl. _____

6. Find three ads that are good for you. Write the information.

	Location (address or neighborhood)	Price	Other
Apt. 1			
Apt. 2			
Apt. 3			

7. Write new abbreviations you found:

8. Write new vocabulary words you learned:

9. Which apartment of the three do you think is the best? Why?

10. What is the contact information? (name and phone number)

11. Call the phone number and ask at least three questions about the apartment for rent. Before you call, write your questions down:

Question 1: _____

Question 2: _____

Question 3: _____

After the phone call:

1. Did you talk to a person or did you leave a message?

2. What information did you find out about the apartment? Write it here:

3. Do you think you would be interested in this apartment? Why or why not?

2. ATTENDING AN OPEN HOUSE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: All of us, including our students, are curious when we see houses put on the market for sale. "How much is it?" we instantly want to know as we pass by it. "What do the bathrooms look like?" we wonder, or, "How big is the kitchen?" Open houses offer us one of those rare opportunities to be respectable snoops, and they can be a great chance for students to see the inside of a home, talk to a realtor, and collect printed material about the house. This activity involves visiting an open house and talking to the realtor or home owner. A successful visit to an open house can do much to make an immigrant feel that he or she is welcome in the community.

PREPARATION: This activity can really only work well with some advance work by the teacher. Find out what open houses are in town - they can be located on realtor.com, or in the local newspaper. Find open houses that are in neighborhoods your students are likely to live in, and are modest in price and appearance. Make a list of the open houses and have students themselves decide which ones to visit - making sure that thirty ESL students do not descend on a one-bedroom condo all at once!

Realtors and home-owners are generally quite receptive to the polite visitor who is not in the market yet, but wants to see what is available. Students should be informed about the "culture" of open houses, in which anyone who is respectful is welcome to come in and look around, and ask questions. They should also be assured that they can be honest about their lack of readiness to buy a home, and even about the fact that they are students doing an assignment; it's very unlikely that they will be rebuffed.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This exercise would be difficult for a beginner-level student, but an intermediate or advanced student should be able to ask the questions necessary to complete the task. It should take about an hour.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- "May we look around?"
- "We are not ready to buy a house yet, but we'd like to see what's available."
- "Do you have any information about this house?"
- "Do you have a business card I could have?"

Community Activity
Attending an Open House

Name: _____

Task: Visit an open house in your town, and try to find out the following information. Some answers you can get just by looking around; others you will have to ask about.

1. What street is the open house on? _____
2. What is the name of the real estate company selling the house? (There is usually a sign outside.) _____
3. What is the price of the house? _____
4. What appliances does the house have? (dishwasher, washing machine, dryer, microwave) _____
5. Is the stove gas or electric? _____
6. How many bedrooms does the house have? _____
7. Does the house have central air? _____
8. If this is a condominium, how much is the monthly assessment? _____

After the visit:

1. What are some things that you liked about this house?
2. Is there anything that you didn't like about it?
3. Would you like to live in this house? Explain
4. How did you feel as you walked around this house?

3. CALCULATING NEW HOME COSTS

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Buying a home or a condo is perhaps the chief symbol of an immigrant's "arrival" in the United States. Of course, it's unlikely that many newcomers with limited English will be at all close to realizing this dream, but figuring out how much a mortgage could cost may be a valuable exercise for them. In times when interest rates are low, many students may be surprised to discover that a long-term mortgage would not be extravagantly more costly than the rent they're paying. At the very least, this exercise provides information that everyone is curious to know: can I afford a home?

PREPARATION: There is much that can be done to prepare students for this fairly simple activity, especially in the way of class discussion. Lead students in a conversation about what the average price of a condominium or house would be in the area, and also what average rents are. Talk about some of the steps involved in buying a house: talking to a realtor, getting pre-approved for a mortgage, going to open houses. Find out if any students in the class already own a home, and ask them to discuss the process. Of course, for many students, the possibility of buying a home is slim or non-existent, but the exercise can have value as a way of learning about housing in the U.S., and also as a computer skills task.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This task would be appropriate for intermediate and advanced level students who have basic familiarity with computer usage. It is a fairly short exercise; it will only take them ten or fifteen minutes to figure out mortgage costs, but the whole activity might take them about half-an-hour.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

- Long-term loan
- Mortgage
- Interest rates
- 30-year fixed mortgage
- Home Finance
- Down Payment
- Affordable
- Closing Costs

Computer Activity
Calculating New Home Costs

Name: _____

In the United States, many people own houses or condominiums. Many people consider it the American dream to own their own home. The prices always seem very high, but if you have a long-term loan, such as one for 30 years, your monthly payment may be lower than the rent you pay for an apartment. For example, if you buy a condominium for \$150,000, and the interest rate for 30 years is 6%, your monthly payment will be about \$900. (This does not include extra costs for taxes, insurance, etc.)

Task: Follow the directions below to find out if you can afford to buy a condominium or house.

1. On your computer, go to www.realtor.com
2. On the top of the screen, click on "Home Finance"
3. Now click on "Mortgage", which is also near the top of the screen
4. On the "Mortgage" screen, in the upper left-hand corner, it will tell you today's mortgage rates. Write down the rate for a 30-year fixed mortgage. (This means that it will take you 30 years to pay for the home.)
5. On the "Mortgage" screen, go to #2 Check, and click on "Calculate Your Mortgage Payments"
6. In the Mortgage Calculator, write in the amount of a loan (Example: \$100,000, \$125,000, \$150,000, etc.). Then write in today's interest rate. Click "Go"
7. Scroll down until you see the monthly amount. Write down the amount you see.
8. Does this seem affordable to you? (Remember! When you buy a condominium or house, you have to pay extra for insurance and taxes. That can add a couple of hundred dollars to your monthly payments.

There are also closing costs when you buy a home, and the interest rates change every day.) If buying a condominium or house seems affordable, you should talk to a real estate agent and find out if buying a home is a possibility for you.

9. Go back to the homepage (www.realtor.com) and see if you can find some homes in your price range. Type in your zip code, your minimum and maximum amounts (Example: \$100,000-\$150,000), and the number of bedrooms and bathrooms that you want. Can you find any homes for sale in your neighborhood?

10. Write down the address of a home that you find for sale in your neighborhood.

11. How much does this house cost? _____

12. Write down some features that this house has - number of bedrooms, central air, garage, etc. _____

13. Go back to the mortgage calculator and type in the price of the house. Find out how much the monthly payment would be. (Most people put a down payment on a house when they buy it, so that their monthly payment is less.)

4. RENTING AN APARTMENT ONLINE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: One of the most important things for immigrants to learn is how and where to search for information. And one area where good information is essential to immigrants is apartment-searching. Complaints about bad landlords and high rents are a constant among a population that is less well-informed than it can be, and this online activity will help students to understand what they should be looking for, and what they can expect to pay for the kind of apartment that is in their price range. This exercise, like the first exercise in this unit, will also help students become familiar with the commonly-used terminology and abbreviations seen in apartment advertisements.

PREPARATION: Begin by finding out from students what they need in an apartment. Get students to make a list of things they would require, for example two bedrooms, heat included in the rent, etc. After that, have a discussion about what students can expect to find in the rental market. What would one expect to pay for a one-bedroom? An apartment with central air? One with a parking space? Also, what are the sorts of features that are common to most rental units in their price range. Should they expect heat to be included, a separate dining room, etc? Sharing these ideas may help motivate students in bad rental situations to make a change.

Next, offer students a list of abbreviations and phrases that are frequently-used in apartment classifieds. (The first exercise in this unit has such a list.) See if they can turn the abbreviations into words.

Finally, discuss the process of searching for an apartment. Word-of-mouth is perhaps the most common method, but what about searching in newspapers and on the Internet? Do students feel these methods are trustworthy? What are the steps involved from the initial perusal of the newspaper or website to signing the lease? The better students understand this process, the better-equipped they will be to do the exercise.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This exercise is for intermediate and advanced-level students, and can be completed in about forty five minutes. There are also many other websites where one can search for apartments. In the Chicago area, the *Chicago Reader* and the *Chicago Tribune* websites have many such ads.

Computer Activity
Renting an Apartment Online

Name: _____

There are many places to search online for an apartment to rent. A popular place to search for housing in Chicago is the *Reader*, where you can do many things: rent an apartment, search for a job, buy furniture or other things.

Task: Follow the directions below to search for an apartment.

1. Go to www.chireader.com
2. Click on "CLASSIFIEDS" (located on the left side)
3. Go to Housing for Rent/Sale
4. Follow the directions on the left side to get a list of apartments. Choose the kind of apartment you want to find, the zip code, and the minimum and maximum amount you want to pay. (Hint: Keep your minimum and maximum amounts close, for example \$700-\$750, or your list will be too long. If you get too many ads, make your two amounts smaller, for example \$700-\$725.)
5. Click on "Search"
6. You will see a list of apartments for rent. Read two of the advertisements and answer the following questions about each one.

Apartment #1:

- a) What is the rent?
- b) What is the address of the apartment? If there is no address, what neighborhood is the apartment in? (If you would like to find out where a neighborhood is located, go to: <http://www.chicago-neighborhoods.net>)
- c) What does this apartment have that looks good to you?

- d) Is there anything that you don't like about this apartment?
- e) If you want to rent the apartment, how do you contact the owner?

Apartment #2:

- a) What is the rent?
- b) What is the address of the apartment? If there is no address, what neighborhood is the apartment in? (If you would like to find out where a neighborhood is located, go to: <http://www.chicago-neighborhoods.net>)
- c) What does this apartment have that looks good to you?
- d) Is there anything that you don't like about this apartment?
- e) If you want to rent the apartment, how do you contact the owner?

5. COMPARING CITIES

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This Internet activity is designed to have students compare living in different cities. This can be relevant to students' lives if they are considering moving to a another city. Even if that is not the case, students find it very interesting to compare various aspects of cities.

PREPARATION: This activity is well-suited to complement a unit on housing and also a grammar unit on comparative forms. Students can start with a general discussion comparing cities, such as their hometown with the city they live in now. Cities can be compared on the basis of population, weather, cost of living, etc. The teacher should ask students to name a U.S. city that they would like to live in or that they are curious about.

Students need to be familiar with using the internet, such as scrolling down a page and moving the cursor.

RECOMMENDATIONS: If students are not very confident in using the Internet, the teacher can do a sample beforehand and print it out, using the sample as a reading activity in class. Then have students go to the lab and compare their own two cities. This activity lends itself very well to a review/practice of comparative forms once the students have completed the computer activity. The students could do other follow-up activities, such as locating the cities on the classroom map or writing a comparative paper. Higher-level students could be assigned to do more research on the city, which they could present to the class.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- 2-letter state abbreviations: IL, CA, TX...
- Temperature Range
- Median Income
- Crime Index

Computer activity
Comparing Cities

NAME _____

Task: For this activity, you will compare two cities.

1. I would like to compare _____ and _____

2. Type in the address realtor.com

3. Click on "Moving" on the top of the screen. Then click on the "Salary Calculator" on the left of the screen. Enter your salary, choose specific cities and your housing preference (own or rent). Click on "calculate". Write the results:

If you make \$ _____
(your salary)

Living in _____
(city)

You would need to make \$ _____

Living in _____
(city)

4. Go Back. Look at "Find a neighborhood". Click on "city comparison". Select the country (United States or Canada) and state of your origin country. Select the country and state of the destination country. Click "next". Scroll down and click on the city names.

5. What 2 cities did you compare?

Cities: _____

Population: _____

Median Income: _____

Unemployment	_____	_____
Crime index	_____	_____
Winter temp. range	_____	_____
Summer temp. range	_____	_____
Snowfall	_____	_____
3 bdrm house	_____	_____
2 bdrm apt	_____	_____
sales tax	_____	_____
school expenses per child	_____	_____

Write any other interesting information you find here:

Which city do you think is a better place to live? Why?

Unit Five: Health

1. Visiting the Doctor
2. Going to the Pharmacy
3. Going to a Health Fair
4. Safety in the Home
5. Computer Task: Health Information Online

1. VISITING THE DOCTOR

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: All parents take their children to the doctor, whether it is to their regular family doctor or to a health clinic. In the latter case especially, parents may not speak the language of the doctor; and, indeed, may have different doctors each time. This assignment gives parents - and the parenting class instructor - the chance to assess health care needs, and also helps the parents to think about how to communicate with their family health practitioner.

PREPARATION: Discuss who in the class has a regular family physician, and who goes to a health clinic when medical attention is required. (This exercise can also allow literacy programs to help children get Kid Care, by identifying those children in need of coverage.) Have students make a list of the sort of questions one might ask while at the doctor's office. For example, if the doctor prescribes medicine, what are the possible side effects? How long should the child be on the medication? Parents can work in pairs for this exercise, writing down possible questions.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Parents will turn these forms in at different times, but this allows the class to return to the health care theme repeatedly. Each time a form comes back, talk about the parent's experience with the class. What vocabulary came up during the visit that could be useful to all parents? What were the steps that the parent took, from making the appointment to getting the medicine? Was the doctor one that could be recommended to others?

It could also be useful to the class as students return forms to make a list of doctor's offices and health clinics that serve low-income families well, and to give students access to this regularly-updated list.

USEFUL LANGUAGE: Most ESL teachers do entire units on health care, and the vocabulary for such units ranges from simple words like body parts to complex descriptions of illness. At a minimum, give students a survival course for doctor's offices. Also, encourage them to ask questions: "Does this medicine have side-effects?" "Can I call you if I don't feel better?" "Is there anything I shouldn't do?"

Community Activity
Visiting the Doctor

Name: _____

Task 1: Answer these questions about health care. Circle YES or NO

- 1) Do you have health insurance for yourself? YES NO
- 2) If you have children, do they have health insurance? YES NO
- 3) Do you know where a health clinic is in your neighborhood? YES NO
- 4) If YES, what is the name of the health clinic? _____
- 5) Where is it located? _____
- 6) When you visit this health clinic, how much does it usually cost? _____

7) Have a conversation with one or two of your classmates. If you do not have insurance, or know of a health clinic, ask your classmates where an inexpensive health clinic in your town is located. Find out if they can recommend a good doctor. If your children do not have health insurance, ask your classmates or your teacher about KidCare.

Task Two: After you visit a doctor, answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the name of your doctor? _____
- 2) Where is the doctor's office located? _____
- 3) How did you make an appointment with your doctor? (In person, by telephone?) _____
- 4) How long did you have to wait to get an appointment? _____
- 5) How did you pay for this visit? Circle one

Insurance Free Health Clinic I paid regular fees Other

6) Why did you visit the doctor? (Answer only if you feel comfortable.)

7) What are some of the things the doctor told you to do? (Again, answer only if you are comfortable talking about this.)

8) Did you make a follow-up appointment to see the doctor? _____

9) Could you recommend this doctor to other students? _____

2. GOING TO THE PHARMACY

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Students often mention health-related communication as a top concern. This activity involves sending them to a pharmacist to ask questions. It also gives them practice in using a resource (i.e. their local pharmacist) that might be useful to them in the future.

PREPARATION: Teachers should start with health-related vocabulary such as parts of the body and ailments and symptoms. This is followed by discussions about pharmacies and medicines. Students can compare their experiences here and in their native countries. Teachers can bring in samples of over-the-counter medicines. Students need to practice the pronunciation of common medicines. They can review ailments, symptoms and side effects by reading these containers.

Finally, students should complete steps 1-4 *before* going to the pharmacy, and practice with role-plays.

RECOMMENDATIONS: If many students live in the same neighborhood, assigning a pharmacy might be a good idea to avoid any one pharmacist being asked questions by too many different students. Also, teachers should be sensitive to privacy concerns when discussing health; some students may not want to share any real problems they are having.

A related activity is reading medicine labels on prescription medicines to understand abbreviations and dosages. More advanced students can also read about and discuss prescription drug costs and programs in the U.S.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Parts of the body: head, nose, throat...
- Ailments: cold, sore throat, stomachache...
- Symptoms: cough, runny nose...
- Side effects: drowsiness...
- Warnings: Do not take if you are pregnant/ while driving...
- Dosages: pill, tablet, capsule, tsp., drop...
- Questions: "What can I take for...?"
"What do you recommend for...?"
"What's the difference between...?"
"Is this recommended for children?"

Community Activity
Going to the Pharmacy

Name _____

Task: Visit a local pharmacy to get advice about medicine.

Discussion questions:

1. Do you generally use medicine or go to the doctor if you are sick?
2. Have you ever avoided going to the doctor or talking to a pharmacist because you lack confidence in your English?

1. Decide which pharmacy to go to:

(name & address)

2. Decide which ailment you will ask about:

(example: cough, allergies, etc.)

3. Write down at least two questions you will ask the pharmacist.

a.

b.

4. Write down phrases you will use if you can't understand what the pharmacist is saying.

a.

b.

5. Go to the pharmacy. Ask the pharmacist your questions.

After the activity:

1. Did the pharmacist understand your question? YES NO

2. Did you understand the pharmacist's answer? YES NO

3. What did the pharmacist recommend? (Write it here if you want to share your answer.)

4. New words I learned from this activity:

3. GOING TO A HEALTH FAIR

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity is geared toward familiarizing students with free health services offered in their community. It also gives them a chance to get important health information for themselves and their families and to speak English with health professionals.

PREPARATION: The teacher will need to find information on free health fairs or workshops in the community. At our agency (Asian Human Services), we are fortunate to have one or two health fairs annually on-site. This information can be found in local newspapers or through local hospitals or public health agencies. More advanced students can be given the task of finding this information on their own and bringing the results back to class.

The teacher will of course need to go over the vocabulary on the form to be sure the students understand this health vocabulary. Students can work in pairs or as a class in brainstorming possible questions to ask at the health fair.

RECOMMENDATIONS: At our agency, we have gone during class time as a group. In other cases, it will need to be assigned as homework. Teachers need to be sensitive to students' privacy; some may not want to share the information they found out at the health fair.

Related activities can include having guest speakers come to the school to give presentations on health concerns of most interest to students.

USEFUL LANGUAGE: In the assignment itself are many terms that are used during health fairs. Reviews these words and phrases with your students.

Community Activity
Going to a Health Fair

NAME _____

Task: Visit a health fair in your community, and answer questions about the health fair.

I will attend a health fair on _____
(date and time)

at _____
(location)

Before you go:

1. Choose at least 2 tests/shots that you want to have. Circle them.

Flu shot

Dental screening (teeth)

Cholesterol test

Vision screening (eyes)

Blood pressure test

Osteoporosis test (bones)

Diabetes test (blood sugar)

STD's/HIV (sexually-
Transmitted diseases)

2. Choose at least 2 health issues that you want information about. Circle them.

Stop smoking

Developmental disabilities

Asthma

Alcohol/Drugs

Nutrition/weight loss

Women's health: menopause

Diabetes

birth control

HIV/AIDS

prenatal care

Children's health

breast cancer

Mental health/depression

3. Think of at least 2 questions that you would like to ask a health care professional:

a.

b.

After the activity:

1. What shots or tests did you have? _____

2. What health information (brochures) did you pick up? _____

3. Did you ask your two questions? YES NO

4. If yes, did they understand your questions? YES NO

5. Did you understand the answers? YES NO

6. Write the answer to your question(s) if you would like to share the information with your class:

4. SAFETY IN THE HOME

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Safety is one of the most important topics for students. This activity gives students an opportunity to talk about safety and to evaluate what precautions they are taking in their own homes. They will also be able to take steps to make their home safer.

PREPARATION: Go over safety-related vocabulary and bring in pictures or realia (such as a smoke detector or fire extinguisher) and talk about students' individual safety concerns. Find information that clearly explains the need for such items as fire extinguishers, carbon monoxide detectors, and other safety devices.

RECOMMENDATIONS: After sharing their answers about safety precautions in their homes, students should talk about what areas they need to improve. Depending on students' responses, this activity could easily lead to a task where students find out where to get a smoke detector/fire extinguisher/carbon monoxide detector/child-proofing devices, etc. and how much they cost. Also, if students do not have a fire escape plan, have them make one either in class or at home together with their families.

Other related activities include having a guest speaker come to the school, such as from the police or fire department, the 911 emergency center, or from a local community policing/neighborhood watch group.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Smoke Detector
- Carbon Monoxide Detector
- Fire Extinguisher
- Fire Escape

Community Activity
Safety in the Home

Name _____

Task: Answer questions about safety in your home, and then take steps to improve the safety in your home.

1. Do you have a smoke detector in your home? YES NO

How often do you change the battery? _____

Where is your smoke detector? _____

2. Do you have a carbon monoxide detector in your home? YES NO

Where is it? _____

3. Do you have a fire extinguisher? YES NO

Do you know how to use it? YES NO

Where is it? _____

4. If you have young children in your home,
are cleaning products *locked up or out of reach*? YES NO

5. Do you have a *fire escape plan* for you and your family? YES NO

6. What are three safety improvements that you would like to make in your home? Write "1" "2" and "3" next to the most important improvements

_____ get a fire extinguisher

_____ install smoke detectors

_____ make a fire escape plan

_____ other: _____

_____ get a carbon monoxide detector

_____ put safety latches on doors

_____ write down emergency numbers

_____ other: _____

7. How long will it take you to accomplish these three goals?
(Example: It will take me one week to get a fire extinguisher)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

8. Try to make these three safety improvements in your home. When you accomplish one or more of your goals, report to the class what you did, and share with them the steps.

NOTE: Sometimes landlords are willing to make safety improvements in apartment buildings. Ask your landlord if he or she will install smoke alarms, or carbon monoxide detectors.

After the activity:

1. Was it difficult for you to make safety improvements? Describe what was easy and what was difficult.

2. Can you think of other ideas to make our homes safer for our families?

5. HEALTH INFORMATION ONLINE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Many people nowadays use the Internet to search for health information. There is a vast amount of healthcare advice and information to be found, and one good website is familydoctor.org. This activity familiarizes ESL students with the website, and acquaints them with ways of becoming better informed about their health.

PREPARATION: This activity can be used as part of a unit on health or with any health literacy curriculum. There is a lot of information on the website; this activity requires fairly good knowledge of health vocabulary, so it is not geared toward lower-level students. Students should be familiar with parts of the body, names of symptoms, and names of diseases in English. All of this should be practiced in a variety of ways prior to assigning this computer activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS: As with other Internet-based activities, teachers should be quite familiar with the website before sending students to it. There are many possibilities for using this website, so the activity can be revised according to the students' level and interest. Also, remember that websites are subject to change.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- symptoms
- diagnosis
- BMI
- acne
- anorexia nervosa

Computer Activity
Health Information Online

NAME _____

Task: Visit a health-related website and answer the following questions,

1. Go to www.familydoctor.org
2. Look at "Health Tools" (on the left of the screen). Click on "Search by Symptom".
3. Scroll down the page and read the list of symptoms.
4. SITUATION: You have noticed that recently you get headaches after reading or working on the computer. Click on "headaches". Read the list of symptoms.

- What is the possible diagnosis? _____
- What do they recommend? _____

5. Now, click on another symptom on the left of the screen.

6. What did you search for? _____

What did you learn that you didn't know before? _____

7. Click on "Home" at the top of the page.

8. Look at "Health Tools". Click on "BMI Calculator".

9. What does BMI mean? _____

10. A normal BMI is considered between _____ and _____.

If someone's BMI is 30 or higher, what does it mean? _____

What are the risks? _____

11. SITUATION: Alicia is 5 feet 4 inches and weighs 150 pounds. Enter the information.

- What is her BMI? _____
- What is her risk level? _____

12. Enter your own information (But you don't have to write it down!)

*Note: You need to know your height in feet and inches and your weight in pounds.

13. Look at "Health Tools" again. Click on "Dictionary".

14. Click on "A"

15. Scroll down to "acne". What's the definition? _____

16. Scroll down to "anorexia nervosa". What's the definition? _____

17. Look up other terms you are interested in.

After the activity:

1. Do you think this website is a good tool for health information? Why or why not?

2. What new words did you learn from this activity?

Unit Six: Education

1. My Child's School
2. Visiting a Community College
3. Telephone: Illinois Adult Learning Hotline
4. Computer Task: Chicago Public Schools website
5. Computer Task: Truman College website

1. MY CHILD'S SCHOOL

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Every parent should be aware of information relating to the school their children attend. Many ESL/Family Literacy students don't know basic information about their children's school that allows them to call to report their child sick, to participate in parent-teacher conferences, and to communicate with the school principal or other personnel. The purpose of this exercise is to help parents acquire names, numbers and schedules so that they can be better educational partners with their children.

PREPARATION: Start with finding out what students already know and what they don't. Ask questions such as: "What school does your child go to?" "What is your child's teacher's name?" etc. Go over vocabulary for low-level students. It is helpful for teachers to be familiar with area schools because even if students know the name of the school, they might not know the correct spelling and pronunciation.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Most of the parents will not have a great deal of trouble getting the information required for this activity. For students with very limited English, teachers may want to encourage parents to do this together with their children - at least, with their older school-age children. Often parents have children in the same school, and when they bring back the completed forms, they can help each other fill in their answers. This exercise can also lead to a variety of other tasks, such as a role-play of reporting a child's absence from school. This activity can also reveal to the ESL teacher or parent educator what types of questions and concerns the students have about their child's school, which can then lead to other lessons or to helping the parent resolve problems.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Grade (ordinal numbers: 1st, 2nd, 3rd...)
- Principal
- Counselor
- After-school program / extracurricular activities
- Tutoring
- School subjects: math, reading, science, social studies...

**My Child's School
Community Activity**

NAME _____

Task: Answer the following questions about your children's school. To get the answers for some of them, you will need to speak to staff at the school that your children attend.

1. How many children do you have? _____

2. What is the name of your children's school? _____

3. List the names of your children's teachers and grade level (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th)

Child #1 teacher's name: _____ Grade: _____

Child #2 teacher's name: _____ Grade: _____

Child #3 teacher's name: _____ Grade: _____

4. Write the name of the school's principal:

5. Write the address of your child's school:

6. Write the phone number of your child's school:

7. Write the name of the school's secretary:

8. Write the name of the school's counselor: _____

9. What time does your child's school start each morning? _____

10. What time does your child's school finish each day? _____

11. Does your child's school have an after school program? YES NO

If YES, what activities do they have for children?

12. Does anyone at the school speak your native language? YES NO

13. Does your child's teacher speak your native language? YES NO

14. What questions or concerns do you have about your child's school?

After the activity:

- a. Who did you talk to get the information you needed?
- b. Where in your home are you going to keep this information?
- c. Did this activity help you to make contact with people in your child's school?

2. VISITING A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Students who are studying English in a smaller, community-based agency can often be overwhelmed by the size and offerings of a college. A scavenger hunt activity gives them a relatively low-risk method for becoming more familiar with the school. This will help them later to make the transition to a college, where they might want to take advantage of further ESL classes, GED classes or degree programs.

PREPARATION: The teacher should visit the school first to make the scavenger hunt specific to that school. In addition, teachers can make contacts in the school and let them know their students will be coming for a visit and may come in to ask questions.

By having class/group discussions about students' educational and career goals, the teacher can find out students' particular interests and tailor the activity with that in mind. Students should also learn and practice vocabulary related to higher education before doing this activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Students should work in pairs or small groups to perform the activity. This will prevent having a steady stream of students asking the same questions. Groups of students could also be given different information to find out. Following the school visit, students compare their findings. Additional activities can include:

- a scanning activity using the college catalog;
- visiting the college's website to learn more about registration;
- arranging a presentation with a representative from the school;
- having more advanced students arrange appointments with counselors to find out more information about programs of study that they're interested in.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Community college/ city college
- Credit / noncredit
- Associate's degree/ 2-year degree
- Continuing education
- Certificate program
- Admissions Office

Community activity
Visiting a Community College

NAMES _____

Task: Work with a partner(s) to find the following information. You will need to ask some questions to find the information.

1. Go to the Admissions Office. Pick up a continuing education catalog and an application. Bring them back to class.

2. Pick up information about degree/certificate programs that interest you. (For example: nursing, child development, cosmetology, business). Bring them back to class.

3. Where is the cafeteria located? (What floor? What room number?)
What are people doing in there?

4. Where do you get ID cards? _____

5. Where is the library located? (Floor? Room number?) What are the hours of the library?

6. Does the college have a career development center? If yes, what services do they have?

7. Where is the testing center? _____

8. Is there child care available at this college? What are the requirements for registering a child?

9. Notice the people at the college. What kind of people do you see? What languages do you hear?

After the activity:

10. Was it difficult to find the information at the college? If yes, why?

11. What new words or phrases did you learn doing this activity? Write them here:

12. Do you think you would like to study here? Why or why not?

13. If you studied here, what classes would you like to take? List several here:

3. ILLINOIS ADULT LEARNING HOTLINE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This telephone activity is designed to inform students about adult education programs near their homes, and to let them know which local programs offer ESL, GED, citizenship and vocational classes. It may also give them practice in leaving voice messages.

PREPARATION: Because this is an adult education hotline, staff are very accustomed to speaking with non-native English speakers. Tell your students that ESL students call the hotline every day - it's fine for them to speak slowly, and to ask staff to repeat information.

As a part of any general ESL class, students should learn "telephone English" - the language needed to state one's name and reason for calling, to leave voice messages, and to make requests for information. Go over in detail all of the statements and questions that the caller is likely to need in the telephone conversation. Have students practice leaving voice messages (both during in-class activities and on students' actual answering machines.) Using your own program as an example, have students create a dialog in which they ask the questions they will need for the real conversation.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Even low-level English students can do this exercise, provided they are well prepared. It might help for the instructor to call this hotline in advance, and let staff know that your students will be calling, especially if your class is a beginning-level ESL class.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- hotline
- nearest/closest
- schedule
- "I'm calling to find out...."
- "Could you tell me...?"

Telephone Activity
Illinois Adult Learning Hotline

Name: _____

Task: Call the Illinois Adult Learning Hotline to find English, GED or Citizenship classes near your home.

1. Dial 1-800-321-9511.

NOTE: Sometimes companies use letters instead of numbers. The Illinois Adult Learning Hotline is 1-800-SAY-GET IT. The letters are next to the numbers on your telephone.

2. If someone answers the phone, find out the following information:

- Where the nearest English classes are to your home _____

- What the schedule of classes is _____

- How to contact the program (telephone number, address) _____

- If they offer daycare _____
- If they offer GED or Citizenship classes _____

3. If no one answers the phone, leave your name, leave your name, a daytime telephone number, your reason for calling, and the time that you called. When they call you, ask them the questions above.

4. CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEBSITE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Many of our students have school-aged children. It is very important for parents to be involved in their child's education to ensure the child's success. The CPS website has a wealth of information and it is a good idea for students to be familiar with it so they can use it as a resource.

PREPARATION: This task fits in well with a family literacy program or any unit on schools and education. The teacher should preface the activity with a discussion about schools to find out who has children in the public school, what grade they are in, how they help their children with homework, etc. This activity is designed for a low-intermediate or higher class, since the amount of reading could be daunting for beginning students. Students also need to be familiar with using computer functions such as scrolling and clicking.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This activity could easily be expanded as there is much more on the website. This activity offers two examples of useful information for parents. Students can be encouraged to go to the website of their children's school (there are links). More advanced students could read the school report cards, but they must be familiar with reading tables and graphs.

For students who do not have children, the teacher can let them know that this information can be shared with their relatives and friends who have children in school.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Teacher Institute Day
- Professional Development Day
- Report Card Pickup Day
- Tips for Parents
- Encouragement
- Availability
- Discipline
- Scheduling
- Modeling
- Support

Computer Task
Chicago Public Schools Website

Name: _____

Task: Visit the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) website, and gather information about ways to help your school-age child.

PART 1: THE SCHOOL CALENDAR

1. Type the website address: www.cps.k12.il.us
2. Click on "School Calendar" on the left of the screen.
3. How many holidays are there? _____
When is the next school holiday? _____
4. When do classes begin for the school year? _____
5. When is the next Teacher Institute Day? _____
Do students attend on these days? YES NO
6. When is the next Professional Development Day? _____
Do students attend on these days? YES NO
7. When is Report Card Pickup Day? _____
8. When is winter vacation? _____
9. When is spring vacation? _____
10. When does summer vacation begin? _____

PART 2: HOW CAN PARENTS HELP THEIR KIDS?

1. Now click on "Parents" at the top of the page.

2. Read "What do children need from parents?" and answer the questions below.

a) If a mother says to her child, "You can play with your friends after you finish your homework", this is an example of:

- a. encouragement b. availability c. discipline

b) If a father says to his child, "You read your book while I read my newspaper", this is an example of:

- a. scheduling b. modeling c. support

c) If a mother says to her child, "You did an excellent job writing your spelling words!", this is an example of:

- a. availability b. encouragement c. involvement

3. What are 4 questions that you can ask your child's teacher at the beginning of the school year?

- a)
b)
c)
d)

4. Now, click on "Tips for Parents" on the left.

5. Scroll down and read "Tips for Grades K-3". (Read Tips for other grades if you have children in higher grades).

- What are 5 things in this list that you already do?

- a)
b)
c)
d)
e)

- What are 3 ideas that you would like to try?

- a)
b)
c)

5. TRUMAN COLLEGE WEBSITE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: For students interested in continuing their education, a community college website can be quite an interesting place to get information. This activity introduces students to Truman College, part of the Chicago City College system. The exercise will give them a sense of what courses are available to them, the kind of costs they might expect to pay, and ways of applying for admission.

PREPARATION: Start with a discussion about community colleges. What sorts of classes can one expect to take there? If you have researched the website well, find not only traditional courses - ESL, nursing, early childhood, etc. - but also more unusual classes that might appeal to students, such as courses on films, art, or music.

Have students make a list of the kinds of courses they might like to take at a community college, including ESL, career-related and continuing education courses. Also have them write down times of the day and days of the week that they might be available to take a course.

Discuss with students the practice of continuing education in the United States, and the way that even elderly people take courses as a way to pursue a hobby, gain knowledge and meet others. These classes can also be a great way to improve one's English.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This activity is primarily for students who are intermediate-level and higher. It should take them close to an hour to complete.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Admissions
- Tuition
- Fees

Computer Activity
Truman College Website

Name _____

Task: Visit the Truman College website, and gather information about classes that the college offers.

1. Type in the website address: www.ccc.edu/truman
2. Hit "enter".
3. What is the address of Truman College? _____
4. What is the phone number? _____
5. Click on "Academic Calendar"
6. When do fall classes begin? _____
7. When does fall semester end? _____
8. Go back to the top of the page. Go to "Admissions". Click on "Admissions Information".
9. What are 3 ways that you can apply for admission?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
10. Do students have to take a placement test? _____
11. Scroll down to "Frequently Asked Questions".
12. What is the placement test? _____
12. Click on "Tuition and fees".
13. How much is the tuition for Chicago residents? _____

14. How much is tuition for residents outside of Chicago? _____

15. Go back to the top of the page. Go to "Programs". Go to "Adult Education". Click on "Free ESL".

16. Who can take ESL classes? _____

Who can't take ESL classes? _____

17. Are there morning classes? _____ If yes, how many hours per week do the classes meet? _____

18. Are there evening classes? _____ If yes, how many hours per week do the classes meet? _____

19. Are there Saturday classes? _____ If yes, how many hours per week do the classes meet? _____

20. Click on "Programs". Click on "Academic Programs". Click on "General Information". Now scroll down to "Programs of study".

21. How many career programs are there? _____

22. How many certificate programs are there? _____

23. How many continuing education programs are there?

24. Write 2 programs that seem interesting to you:

1) _____

2) _____

25. What questions do you have about this college or these programs?
Write at least one question.

Unit Seven: Employment

1. *Getting a Job Application*
2. *Visiting a Career Resource Center*
3. *Interviewing a Professional*
4. *Computer Task: Chicago Tribune Job Site*

1. GETTING A JOB APPLICATION

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: An application is a necessary part of finding employment. This task prepares the students in asking for an application at a place of business and filling it out correctly.

PREPARATION: The teacher should bring in real applications from different businesses and fill them out with the class. Discuss vocabulary and abbreviations found on the applications. Inform the students of what information is necessary, such as addresses and telephone numbers of past employers and references.

The teachers could discuss or role play possible responses from the businesses. Places of employment may tell the student that they are not hiring, they are out of applications, the student needs to speak to a manager, or the student should fill the application out in the establishment. Students need to be prepared for this variety of responses.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Lower level students, students not currently looking for jobs, and students without the proper documents might not feel comfortable performing this task. In that case, the activity could be done during class time, with the students going to a specific place near the school where the teacher has contacts and has arranged the exchange.

Students should bring the applications back to class and copies can be made so that students can see a variety of formats. The applications can be filled out during class or as homework. Once the students turn in their application, the teacher may hold an interview with the student for the specific position. One final recommendation: have a student that is looking for a job turn in the application at the business.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- May I . . . have an application?
take the application home?
- Are you hiring?
- I'm sorry. I don't have . . . any time right now.
my employment information with me.
- Application vocabulary: position, availability, experience, employment history, references, signature

Community Activity
Getting a Job Application

Name: _____

Task: Go to a restaurant or other business, ask for a job application, and bring it back to class to fill out.

1. Go to the business and ask for a job application.
"May I please have a job application?"
 - If the person asks you to fill out the application right there, tell the person that you don't have time, you don't have all the information with you, or the application is for a friend.
2. Bring the application to class. Discuss your experience with your classmates. Then fill out the application.
3. Turn in the application if you are interested in applying.

After the Activity:

1. Where did you get the application?
2. Who did you speak to?
3. What did the person say when you asked for an application?
4. Would you like to work at this place? Why or why not?

2. VISITING A CAREER RESOURCE CENTER

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: The students will learn about employment resources in their community by visiting a center that offers these services.

PREPARATION: This activity can supplement any unit on employment or education. Teachers should have discussions with students about jobs, careers and students' goals before doing this activity.

The teacher will need to find this resource in the community. Most community colleges and many community agencies have career resource centers.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This activity can be done as a class trip or students could go individually or in small groups outside of class. In our case, there is a career resource center located in our agency, so we invited a speaker to give a presentation to the class about the services.

Students who take advantage of the services can later report back to the class about their experiences, and, hopefully, encourage others to also use the center.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- career resources
- job listings
- job referral
- job training
- resumes
- eligible / eligibility

Community Activity
Visiting a Career Resource Center

NAME _____

Task: A career resource center helps people to find jobs and to find information about careers. You will visit a career resource center in your community and find out about their services.

1. What is the name of the person you spoke to? _____

2. What are the hours of the center? _____

3. Who is eligible to use the services? Are there requirements regarding age, residency, income?

4. What services are available? Check all that apply:

_____ job listings _____ resume writing help _____ career counseling

_____ job referrals _____ fax machines, copiers _____ job training
information

_____ other: _____

5. If a person would like to use the services, what does s/he have to do?

After the activity:

1. Are you interested in using these services? Why or why not?

2. What problems did you have when you talked with the person?

3. What new words or phrases did you learn doing this activity? Write them here:

3. INTERVIEWING A PROFESSIONAL

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Students will learn about an occupation that is interesting to them and have practice speaking with native speakers outside of class.

PREPARATION: This activity can accompany any discussion or unit on occupations or employment. The activity requires a good deal of coordination on the part of the teacher. At least some students will need the teacher's assistance in arranging an interview because they might not know anyone who works in the occupation they choose. Students should think of at least two occupations that interest them to have more options.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Lower-level students should practice the interview questions in class beforehand, perhaps by interviewing the teacher or another student in the class who is working. The students should also practice their introduction to the interview (below) so the interviewees will understand the nature of the assignment.

As an alternative to face-to-face interviews, students could do telephone interviews or email interviews.

A variation on this activity is to invite a speaker or speakers to the class.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Hi, my name is _____. I'm doing an interview for my English class about jobs. Do you have a few minutes? / Could I ask you a few questions?
- I'm sorry. Could you repeat that? / Could you spell that?

Community activity
Interviewing a Professional

NAME _____

1. What is a profession that you are interested in? (For example, preschool teacher, hairstylist, nurse, real estate salesperson, bus driver, etc.)

Write 2 professions that are interesting to you:

a) _____ b) _____

2. Choose one of the professions above and find a person that you can interview about his/her job. If you need some help finding a person, ask your teacher.

3. Interview the person (It must be in English!). Ask these questions and add 2 more.

1) What is your name? _____

2) What is your job title? _____

3) How long have you worked at this job? _____

4) Did you need a college degree or special training for this job? _____

5) If yes, where did you go to school? _____

6) What are your responsibilities on the job? _____

7) What do you like best about your job? _____

8) What do you like least about your job? _____

9) _____?

10) _____?

After the activity:

1. Tell the class what you learned about this profession from your interview.
2. Do you think that you would like this job? Why or why not?
3. What problems did you have when you interviewed this person?
4. What new words or expressions did you learn?

4. THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE JOB SITE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Job searches these days are as likely as not to take place online, and so this is a good exercise to help students get familiar with Internet searches. The Chicago Tribune's "Career Builder" site is a national one, so students don't need to live in the Chicago area to search for a job. The ads on this site will give students who are looking for work a good sense of what is available in the marketplace and what qualifications are needed.

PREPARATION: This exercise fits squarely within any employment-related unit. After students have talked about the job-searching process and learned vocabulary that will help them in interviews and on application forms, they may be ready to see what jobs are available in the market. Get the students to start thinking about qualifications they have - both skills and personal characteristics. If they make a list of these qualities, they may see similar ones required in ads that they look at. As with looking for a home or an apartment, they also need to have a realistic understanding of what they can expect in the way of salary, benefits, working conditions, etc. Have students create a profile of the type of job they could imagine getting, which includes pay, hours, responsibilities, and benefits. This will help them eliminate many jobs in their search.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This activity is for intermediate and advanced-level students. Because of the wealth of information on the site, it will be a difficult activity for any student who doesn't have some basic computer skills. Their task, to find two jobs they are interested in, is fairly simple, but if they do a proper search, it is likely to take 30-40 minutes.

USEFUL LANGUAGE: Get your students acquainted with the different types of jobs in "Select a Category". Also, have them make lists of keywords that they can use in their search, and verify their spelling. Abbreviations are also important in doing job searches; acquaint them with the most familiar ones.

Computer Activity
The Chicago Tribune Job Site

Name: _____

Task: Follow the steps below to get information about jobs from *The Chicago Tribune* website:

1. Type www.chicagotribune.com into the address bar.
2. Click on "Jobs" on the top of the page.
3. Enter a "keyword" that describes the type of job you are looking for. For example, type in "receptionist", "data entry", "mechanic", etc.
4. Type in the city in which you want to find a job.
5. In "Select a Category", choose the area that best describes the job you would like to have. For example, if you want to be a receptionist, select the category "Admin & Clerical".
6. Click on "Search".
7. If you are interested in a common job - data entry, receptionist, etc. - many jobs will appear. In fact, you may have hundreds of choices! To make your list smaller, look at "Start a new search" on the top of the screen. Choose jobs posted within the last 7 days, instead of the last 30 days. Also, choose jobs within 10 or 20 miles, instead of 30 miles.
8. Find two jobs that look interesting to you. In making your choice, do the following:
 - Click on the position and read the job description.
 - Choose jobs that don't pay too much or too little
 - Look at the location. Make sure it is not too far from your home.
 - Look at the requirements. Do you have the skills to do this job?

JOB #1: Title of the job: _____

1. What are the duties of the job?

2. How much does the job pay? _____

3. Is this a job that you think you have the qualifications to do? _____

4. How should you contact the company if you are interested in the job -
email, fax, letter, phone, or walk in? _____

JOB #2: Title of the job: _____

1. What are the duties of the job?

2. How much does the job pay? _____

3. Is this a job that you think you have the qualifications to do? _____

4. How should you contact the company if you are interested in the job -
email, fax, letter, phone, or walk in? _____

After the activity:

1. To apply for a job online, you need several things: a resume, a cover letter, an email address, and the ability to send attachments with email. Do you have all these things? They will help you a lot in your search for a job.

Unit Eight: Leisure

1. Visiting a Chicago Park District Field House
2. Planning a Class Trip
3. Calling a Movie Theater
4. Computer Task: Travel website
5. Computer Task: Chicago Park District website

1. VISITING A CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT FIELD HOUSE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity is designed to introduce students to the programs, many of them free, that are offered by local park offices or community recreation centers. They will also have the opportunity to ask questions of the center's staff.

PREPARATION: This activity can accompany a unit on leisure and recreation activities. It can also be used as part of a parenting education class, with discussion centered around activities for children, such as homework help, summer camp, or recreation activities. The teacher should be aware of the location of such facilities and be able to assist students in finding them. For low-level students, practice the questions and short dialogues before going.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This activity can also be done as a class trip if students all live near one another. Students should share the information they found out. Teachers should encourage students to enroll in these park programs (or enroll their children) and afterwards, students share their experiences. This could be done in the form of a writing assignment, a short presentation, or just a class discussion.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- What kinds of programs do you have?
- Do you have information / a brochure?
- How much does it cost?

Community Activity

NAME _____

Visiting a Chicago Park District Field House

Task: Visit a park near your house. Go with your family or a friend. Go to the park office. Then, answer these questions.

1) What is the name of the park? _____

2) Where is this park? _____

3) What are 2 children's programs they have that your children might like?

a. _____

b. _____

4) How much do these programs cost? _____

5) Do they have after-school homework help? YES NO

If yes, what are the hours? _____

6) What are 2 adult programs they have that you might like?

a. _____

b. _____

7) How much do these programs cost? _____

8) Will they have a summer camp program for the summer? YES NO

If yes, how much will it cost for one child to attend? \$_____

9) Bring back a brochure from the park to share with the class.

After the activity:

1) Will you register for a program at this park? YES NO

2) Did you ask questions at the park office? YES NO

3) If yes, what questions did you ask?

2. PLANNING A CLASS TRIP

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This is a student-centered activity that allows students to learn about interesting sites in their city or town, utilize computer skills by searching on the Internet, and make a class presentation on the information they find.

PREPARATION: This activity can be done as part of a unit on leisure and recreation. It can also be done in a computer literacy class. It makes a nice end-of-term activity since it culminates in taking a class trip.

In order to carry out this activity, students must have familiarity with the Internet. In our class, students had previously used google.com, mapquest.com, and chicagotransit.com websites.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Teachers should have a list of places in mind, such as museums, zoos, conservatories, in case students need ideas. Teachers could suggest some places that students might not already be familiar with. However, this activity works best by allowing the students to decide. For instance, in our class a student suggested a bowling alley, and the class ultimately voted on that for our class trip. This was the first time bowling for many of the students and everyone had a great time.

This activity does not actually have to result in taking the trip, if time and logistics does not allow; however, taking the trip in the end is ideal. A variation would be to have each group take a trip to the place they have researched and then report back to the class, bringing photos, maps, brochures as part of their presentation.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- brainstorm
- kid-friendly

Group activity
Planning a class trip

NAMES _____

Task: For this project, you will work with a group of your classmates and find information about a good place to visit in your city. You will present the results of your research to the class. Follow these steps:

1) Brainstorm with the class a list of interesting places to visit. Write them below. Each group picks a different place.

2) In the computer lab, go to google.com and find the website for the place.

3) Go the website and find information about the place. Complete the information below.

- Name of place: _____
- Address: _____
- Phone number: _____
- Website: _____
- Days & hours: _____
- Cost: _____
- What can we see or do there? (Give a brief summary.)

- Do you think the place is *kid-friendly*? Why or why not?
- Do you think this would be a good place for a class trip? Why or why not?

4) Go to mapquest.com or the website of your public transit system and find out how to get there from the school. Print it out.

5) Call and ask for information about groups. Do we need to make a reservation if we're coming with a group?

6) Is there other information we need? Write your questions below. Ask your questions when you call.

7) Present your information to the class.

8) The class will vote on where they would most like to go.

After the activity:

1) Our class voted on: _____

2) Date the class will go: _____

3) Cost of the trip: _____

4) I will go on the trip: YES NO

3. CALLING A MOVIE THEATER

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity gives students practice in making a telephone call in a useful and interesting context. Most students go to the movie theater at one time or another. Even if they don't, this is a low-risk listening activity.

PREPARATION: Students discuss the types of movies they like to watch, how often they go to the movie theater, how often they rent movies at home, etc. Bring in movie ads from the newspaper. Students can share which movies they have seen or heard something about. Students then choose a movie or movies they would like to see. They then need to find a convenient theater and the phone number. Usually the ads indicate where the movie is playing, but students might need help in finding the telephone number. Most movie theaters have recordings listing the showtimes, so students can listen as many as times as they want. However, it is a good idea for the teacher to call some theaters ahead of time to help prepare students for the various menu options of these recordings. Some smaller theaters still have a person who answers the phone, so prepare students for that too.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Students share their findings afterwards. If students are having difficulty, teachers could record the phone message using a speaker phone and prepare a listening activity for class.

A fun activity would be to go as a class to see a movie, or students go to a movie on their own and then write a movie review.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- showtimes
- starring
- rated (G, PG, PG-13, R)
- comedy, drama, action, suspense, horror, documentary...

7. Call the theater to find out the showtimes, prices, and location.
Write the information here:

8. What other information did they give on the phone message?

After calling:

1. Did you listen to a recorded message or did you talk to a person?
2. If it was a message, how many times did you listen to the message?
3. If it was a person, did you have any difficulties communicating with that person? Explain.
4. Was this a good language practice activity for you? Explain.

5. THE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT WEBSITE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Chicago has the largest park district in the United States, and one doesn't have to be a Chicago resident to search this website and discover the abundance of activities that the city's parks offer. At the very least, such an exercise as this can give even non-Chicago immigrant students an idea of the kinds of recreation that cities and towns offer. This exercise is a means to get the students involved in the community in which they live. After completing this activity, the student will have the location and phone number of parks near their house, and information about an activity that the student is interested in. Hopefully, the student will take this activity a step further and register for a class at their local park district.

PREPARATION: This activity could be included in a variety of units - hobbies, date and time, simple present, community involvement. The students should have some experience searching the Internet before completing this activity. A discussion about hobbies or classes for adults could precede this computer activity. If the students have Internet experience, a beginner student can complete this activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS: A visit to a park district facility could be a wonderful addition to this activity. The students could explore the local park and get a feel for what types of activities are available. For low-level students, or programs without Internet access, a visit could be substituted for this computer activity. Also, the teacher should strongly encourage the students to register for the courses that they researched. The students can also register their children for these courses.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Facilities

Computer Activity
Chicago Park District Website

Name _____

Part One: Find a park near your home.

1. Type in www.chicagoparkdistrict.com
2. Click on "parks and facilities" (in the box on the left side)
3. In the top right corner, type in your zip code and click "go".
4. Write down the names of 2 parks close to your house.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
5. Click on the name of the park that is closest to your house
 - a) What is the address of the park?
 - b) What activities does the park offer? (Look at the gray circles on the right of the page.)
6. Click "Back" one time to return to the list of parks in your zip code. Click on the name of the second park near your house.
 - c) What is the address of the park?
 - d) What activities does the park offer?

Part Two: Find a specific activity that you would like to do.

1. Click on "programs" at the top of the page. Look at the activities listed under "programs" on the right. There are hundreds of different activities to choose from. You may also type in your zip code, a key word, or an age group to make the search more specific.
 - a) What activity did you select?
 - b) What park(s) is it offered at?
2. Click on the activity at the park where you want to attend to find out specific information about the program.
 - a) What are the dates for this program?
 - b) What day(s) and time is the program?
 - c) Is there a fee for this activity?

Unit Nine: Community Involvement

1. Solving a Neighborhood Problem
2. Calling 3-1-1 for Civic Information
3. Computer Task: Finding Citizenship Information Online
4. Computer Task: are my elected officials?
5. Computer/Community Task: Volunteer Opportunities

1. SOLVING A NEIGHBORHOOD PROBLEM

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Everyone may, on occasion, find it necessary to call upon their local government to remedy a local problem or hazard. In a big city, such problems are commonplace, particularly in the low-income neighborhoods in which immigrants tend to live. Our students should become familiar with the ways that we report community problems to local officials.

PREPARATION: Begin with a discussion of typical urban hazards or problems. Teachers can bring pictures, for example, of traffic violations, derelict buildings, broken windows and sidewalks, malfunctioning traffic signals, and so on. Have students identify similar problems that exist in their own neighborhoods or in the neighborhood around the school. The class could also take a short walking tour of the neighborhood surrounding their school building, taking notice of hazards and recording the address and time and date of each. For instance, in our program, the class made a map of the nearby intersection, and indicated where the "NO TURN ON RED" signs were not clearly visible. The teacher then called the office of the local alderman, made an appointment to visit the office, and the class visited the office and presented their list of complaints.

RECOMMENDATION: For lower-level students, it would work best to have the class as a whole identify one problem, perhaps one in the neighborhood surrounding the school. Higher-level students could be placed in groups, each identifying its own problem. This activity could be carried out as a visit to the alderman's office or as a telephone call. In Chicago, residents with non-emergency problems often call 3-1-1.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- I'd like to report a problem
- I live in your ward/district
- There's a hazardous/dangerous problem in my neighborhood
- Potholes
- Intersection

Community Activity
Solving a Neighborhood Problem

Name: _____

Task: Identify a problem in your neighborhood and report it to the city.

1. Talk with your classmates. What are some problems that you see in the neighborhood where you live or the neighborhood around the school?

Check (✓) the ones that you see:

___ broken windows (Where?) _____

___ broken sidewalks (Where?) _____

___ broken streetlight (Where?) _____

___ dangerous intersection (Where?) _____

___ potholes in the street (Where?) _____

___ other problem: _____

2. Choose one neighborhood problem that you would like to see fixed. Write it down here: _____

3. Who should you contact to report this problem? Write down a city official and telephone number. _____

4. Before you make your phone call, write down a list of things to say. What exactly is the problem? Give as many details as possible.

5. Report the problem to a city official.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

My name is _____. I study English at Asian Human Services, at 4800 North Broadway. I would like to report a problem. _____

After the activity:

1. Who did you talk to?
2. Did you have a problem talking to the person? If yes, explain.
3. What was the response of the person that you spoke to?
4. Did the problem get fixed? If not, did they tell you when they would fix the problem?
5. New words you learned from this activity:

2. *CALLING 3-1-1 FOR CIVIC INFORMATION*

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: This activity gives students the opportunity to practice speaking and listening on the telephone, and to learn who their representatives in local government are, information which can be valuable to them in their roles as residents, parents and neighbors.

PREPARATION: This activity can supplement a unit on American civics. Students should understand the basic organization of city government before calling 3-1-1, the local Chicago phone number for police and fire non-emergency matters and for general municipal information. Teachers could bring in a copy of a Chicago map to show how the city is divided into wards. Discussion should also center around why it is important to know one's alderman and the contact information. Some students may have met their aldermen before, such as at a community meeting. Talk about what kinds of things aldermen do for the city and what kinds of concerns students have in their neighborhoods currently.

The telephone exchanges in this task will be quite short, though perhaps not particularly easy. Students will need to be familiar with numbers, addresses and letters, and it is a good idea to do some practice beforehand.

RECOMMENDATIONS: As with other telephone activities, it is helpful to make an office phone available to students, if possible, in case they are having difficulties communicating. The teacher could assist the student or pair two students together to make the call. Note that 3-1-1 is not available in all localities, in fact, not even in Chicago suburbs. However, this activity could be adapted for finding information about other communities.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- ward
- alderman
- How do you spell that?
- Could you repeat that please?

Telephone activity

NAME _____

Calling 3-1-1 for Civic Information

Task: Find out the name and contact information for your alderman (or other local government representative). Then, call the alderman's office to find out when the next community meeting is.

Suggested language: "I would like to find out my ward and alderman. My address is _____. Could you please tell me the address and phone number too?"

1. Call 3-1-1.

2. Find out the following information:

- My Ward # _____
- My Alderman's name _____
- My Alderman's Address _____
- My Alderman's Phone Number _____

3. When you have the Alderman's phone number, call his or her office, and find out the following information:

- The next community meeting _____
- The address of the next meeting _____

After the activity:

1. Did you understand the 3-1-1 operator? Yes No

2. Did you understand the person in the alderman's office? Yes No

3. Do you have any questions or concerns for your alderman? If yes, write them here.

3. FINDING CITIZENSHIP INFORMATION ONLINE

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Many of our ESL students are interested in becoming U.S. citizens. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services website is probably the best source of information for students. It gives them answers to frequently asked questions and also has a naturalization self-test consisting of the 100 civics questions that applicants should study. Even students who do not plan to become citizens should be familiar with basic information on U.S. government and history in order to better understand the news, help their children with social studies homework and participate more fully in their communities.

PREPARATION: This activity is suitable for a citizenship preparation course or for any unit on U.S. civics. The activity should be preceded by class discussions on U.S. citizenship - who in the class is a citizen already, who is planning on becoming a citizen, what the benefits and requirements are, etc. In addition, readings and/or audio/visual activities on U.S. government and history should precede the naturalization self-test.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Much can be done with the citizenship questions to review and learn them: games such as Bingo and Jeopardy, flashcards, etc. Another extension activity is to have the students choose 10 or 20 of the civics questions and ask an American-born individual the questions. Our class enjoyed this activity and shared the results with the rest of the class.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- Naturalization
- Legal Permanent Resident

Computer Activity
Finding Citizenship Information Online

Name _____

Task: Find information related to becoming a U.S. citizen.

1. Type in the website for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Their web address is www.uscis.gov.
2. Click on "Citizenship" on left side of the screen.
3. Scroll down and click on "Welcome to the US: A Guide for New Immigrants" (located on the bottom right side of the page).
4. Scroll down and click on "Becoming a US Citizen."
5. On this page there is a section entitled "Why Become a U.S. Citizen?" Read the 12 reasons. Write six of the reasons here:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____

6. Look at the section entitled naturalization. What does "naturalization" mean? _____

7. How long must you live in the US as a LPR (Legal Permanent Resident) before you can become a citizen? _____

9. Scroll down to Requirements for Naturalization. (Write down the six requirements.)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

10. Go back to the "Office of Citizenship" web page, and click on the "Naturalization Self-Test" (located on the right side).

11. Take the practice test to see how much you know about US history and government. Click "Generate questions" to get started. Answer the 5 questions that appear by clicking on the answers. Click "Review answers" to check your answers. Click "Generate questions" again and answer the next 5 questions, and so on.

12. Approximately what percent did you get correct? _____

13. Ask your teacher if you can print out the questions to study at home. Try the test again later.

4. WHO ARE MY ELECTED OFFICIALS? *Notes for Teachers*

PURPOSE: Newspapers and TV news are full of references to our elected officials, especially during election years, and if our ESL students are to participate in this dialogue, they need to be familiar with the names and titles of these officials. The website *vote-smart.org* provides this basic information. During election season, it also contains names and parties of candidates running for office.

PREPARATION: This activity could accompany a unit or a course in US civics. Students should be aware of the basic organization of government in the US: federal, state, and local. Students generally know the President of the US, but often don't know what Congress is or how it is organized (Senate and House of Representatives). Teachers should also give a similar overview of state government. Depending on the level of the students, this background can be simple or more involved, and there are many ESL resources that can be used.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This activity provides one model of information that can be found on the website. It will need to be revised to keep information current. This activity is suitable for a low-level class, but higher-level students could easily do much more, such as reading candidates' positions on issues, going to candidates' web pages to find their positions, or sending emails or writing letters to the officials on issues of importance to the students.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- political party
- Congress
- Senate/Senator
- House of Representatives/Representatives
- Governor

Computer Activity

NAME _____

Who are my elected officials?

Task: You will find out the names of your elected officials, their party and contact information.

1. Type in the address: www.vote-smart.org
2. Enter your 9-digit ZIP code. Click "GO". (Don't know your 9-digit ZIP code? Click and find out. Then go back and type it in.)
3. Write the following information here about your **CURRENT OFFICIALS**:

President: _____ Party: _____

Vice-President: _____ Party: _____

US Senator: _____ Party: _____

US Senator: _____ Party: _____

US House: _____ Party: _____

IL Senate: _____ Party: _____

IL Rep: _____ Party: _____

Governor: _____ Party: _____

4. Now, click on "President _____ (write in name of U.S. President)". Scroll down to "Contact Information". Write the following information:

- Washington DC email address: _____
- Washington DC address: _____
- Phone (for comments): _____

5. Go Back. Click on Governor Rod Blagojevich. Write the following:

- Email address: _____
- Address: _____
- Phone: _____

5. VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Notes for Teachers

PURPOSE: Many immigrant students express an interest in doing volunteer work but don't know how to find out about the opportunities available. Many students cannot do paid work for various reasons: they don't have the authorization to work; they have young children to care for; they have limited English. However, they want to participate in the community, meet Americans and practice English. Volunteermatch.org is a national website that matches interested persons with volunteer opportunities. This is a starting point to get students involved in volunteer work.

PREPARATION: Survey the students to gauge their interest in doing volunteer work. Many students don't have volunteer experience, so they need to understand what kinds of opportunities there are. Have students with volunteer experience share their stories or have students talk to Americans (teachers, neighbors) about their volunteer experiences. Students may feel that they don't have the requisite skills, but they can learn that there are a variety of opportunities for people of all skill levels and even English-language skills: working in a food pantry, planting gardens, playing games or making arts & crafts with children do not require advanced skills. Before doing the computer task, facilitate the discussion in Part 1 and go over all necessary vocabulary.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This activity works best with students who are at an intermediate level of English or above, both for navigating the website and for following through with the volunteer opportunity. However, it may be adaptable for lower-level students. Also, if there is not computer access for students, the teacher could copy down the listed organizations and students could contact them by phone or walk-in.

All students should be encouraged to follow through with their contacts and then to do the volunteer work. More reticent students could choose an opportunity that requires only a one-time commitment. Be sure to have a discussion with students about the commitment required. If students are really not sure, they should not choose a high-commitment placement.

Computer/Community Task
Volunteer Opportunities

NAME _____

Task: Research volunteer opportunities in your area, and contact organizations about the possibility of doing volunteer work.

Part 1. *Discuss with your classmates.*

1. Have you ever worked as a volunteer? Do you know anyone who has worked as a volunteer? What kind of work do volunteers do?

2. Are you interested in working as a volunteer? If you worked as a volunteer, would you want to work with: (Check ✓ as many as you want)

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> animals | <input type="checkbox"/> arts & culture | <input type="checkbox"/> children & youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> disabled people | <input type="checkbox"/> the environment | <input type="checkbox"/> politics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> immigrants | <input type="checkbox"/> women | <input type="checkbox"/> seniors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> church groups | <input type="checkbox"/> homeless/hungry people | |

3. What type of work would you want to do? (Check ✓ as many as you want)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> clerical (typing, mailing) | <input type="checkbox"/> tutoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> cooking/serving food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> assisting people | <input type="checkbox"/> sports & games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> gardening/planting | <input type="checkbox"/> maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> arts & crafts | <input type="checkbox"/> driving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cashier/sales | <input type="checkbox"/> computers |

4. How far would you travel to do volunteer work? ___ 5 miles ___ 10 miles

Part 2. *Computer task.*

1. Type in the address: volunteermatch.org

2. Enter your zip code. Click "search".

3. *Narrow your search.* Select the number of miles you would travel and select one kind of volunteer work you would like to do. Click "search".

4. How many volunteer opportunities did you find? _____

5. Read the list of volunteer opportunities. Click on the ones that you want to learn more about.
6. Choose one that interests you. Write the following information:

Name of volunteer opportunity: _____

Name of organization: _____

Address: _____

Details: _____

Skills needed: _____

Date: _____

Estimated time of commitment: _____

of volunteers needed: _____

7. Click "I like this opportunity".

8. Register your information. (Option: You can write a message to the organization if you want). When you finish, click "send".

10. You will immediately get a Confirmation. Print out the Confirmation sheet.

After the activity:

1. Tell the class about the volunteer opportunity you applied for.
2. Did you receive a response from the organization? If yes, did they email you or call you? If no, are you going to contact them?
3. Are you going to volunteer for this organization? If yes, when?
4. After your volunteer experience, share your experience with your classmates. Do you recommend volunteering with this organization? What did you learn?

Student Surveys

In this section, there are several surveys that we have developed to gauge the students' interest and current involvement in their community. The teacher can use these surveys to decide which activities are of interest or relevant to the particular class.

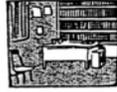
The first three surveys are intended for a lower level student. The first survey is pictorial. It is intended for a very low level learner, even one with low literacy skills. The student can either check the activities that he or she does currently or the activities that the student is most interested in practicing during class. The second survey is not meant to determine student goals, but rather to give the teacher an idea as to what activities to include in the semester's plans. If most of the students do not have a library card, for example, a library visit would be an obvious task for the class. The third survey is more interested in why the students want to study English. It is meant to determine what general goals the students have.

The final survey is more extensive, and gauges which community practices the students currently participate in and which activities the students struggle with because of their English. At the end of the survey, it asks students to detail why the particular situation is difficult or what specifically the student wants to learn. This should give the teacher a very strong indication of what activities are deemed important to the student. The survey is organized in order of the units contained in this book.

My Goal is to:



Feel better about my reading ability



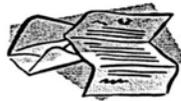
Learn to use the Library



Read the newspaper



Get my GED



Read my mail



Get my driver's license



Get a better job



Read to my children



Use the phone, take messages



Help my kids with homework



Use a computer



Count change, understand money



Follow recipes



Speak more English



Do banking, balance a check book



Read medications



Learn about U.S.



Fill out forms, job applications

Survey: Community Involvement by Students

Please circle "yes" or "no" for each question. If you don't understand the question, do not circle anything.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Do you have a computer? | YES | NO |
| 2. Do you have a telephone? | YES | NO |
| 3. Do you have a car? | YES | NO |
| 4. Do you have a driver's license? | YES | NO |
| 5. Do you take the bus? | YES | NO |
| 6. Do you take the train? | YES | NO |
| 7. Do you walk to school? | YES | NO |
| 8. Do you go to the post office? | YES | NO |
| 9. Do you have a library card? | YES | NO |
| 10. Do you rent an apartment? | YES | NO |
| 11. Do you own a house? | YES | NO |
| 12. Do you have health insurance? | YES | NO |
| 13. Do you take medicine every day? | YES | NO |
| 14. Do you have children in school? | YES | NO |
| 15. Do you have a job? | YES | NO |

If yes, do you work full-time or part-time? _____
If no, do you want a job? YES NO

Goals Survey

Many people make goals in their lives. "Learning English" is a goal that all of you are trying to reach. Probably you have other goals that are important to you. Below are some goals that many people have. If the goal is important to you, put a check next to "Yes". If it is not important to you, or you are not sure, check "No" or "Maybe." Write two or three goals next to "Other", if you can think of anything else you want to do this year. Also, write WHEN you want to reach this goal (for example, "6 months", "one year", "5 years").

Goal	Yes	No	Maybe	When?
Find a job	_____	_____	_____	_____
Improve my English	_____	_____	_____	_____
Take college classes	_____	_____	_____	_____
Buy a house	_____	_____	_____	_____
Change apartments	_____	_____	_____	_____
Become a U.S. citizen	_____	_____	_____	_____
Register to vote	_____	_____	_____	_____
Work as a volunteer	_____	_____	_____	_____
Get a driver's license	_____	_____	_____	_____
Help at my child's school	_____	_____	_____	_____

Other:

Other:

Other:

Survey: Community-based Topics & Practice

Your Name: _____

There are many situations that you encounter everyday which require English. Listed below are some of these situations. Which of these situations are difficult because of your English skills? Are you interested in practicing these situations during this course?

Please number each one 2, 1, or 0.

2= very interested

1= a little interested

0= not at all interested

Transportation

- ___ bus
- ___ train
- ___ airplane/airport
- ___ reading a map
- ___ asking directions

Government offices

- ___ using the post office
- ___ getting driver's licenses or auto registration
- ___ going to court (parking tickets, accidents, arrests...)
- ___ going to immigration office
- ___ using the library

Shopping/Businesses

- ___ banks
- ___ grocery stores
- ___ clothing store
- ___ department store
- ___ travel agency
- ___ computer/electronics store
- ___ movie theaters
- ___ restaurants

Housing

- ___ finding an apartment
- ___ buying a house or condominium
- ___ filling out/signing leases
- ___ asking landlord for repairs
- ___ talking to utility companies (gas, electric, phone)
- ___ getting repair work at my home (plumber, electrician, etc.)

Emergency and Health

- ___ reporting a crime to police
- ___ reporting a fire
- ___ child safety
- ___ first aid/CPR
- ___ neighborhood watch groups/community policing
- ___ talking to doctors and hospital staff
- ___ buying medicine at the pharmacy

Educational services

- ___ registering for college classes or training programs
- ___ dealing with my child's school (correspondences, report cards, etc.)
- ___ attending school meetings
- ___ getting a tutor for my child
- ___ helping my child with homework

Employment

- ___ looking for a job in the classified ads
- ___ going to an employment agency/service
- ___ preparing a resume
- ___ filling out job applications
- ___ going on job interviews
- ___ talking to my boss about problems at work
- ___ finding volunteer work
- ___ understanding paychecks/benefits

Talking with others

- ___ making American friends
- ___ making "small talk" with strangers
- ___ making telephone calls/leaving messages

Other?

Look at the situations where you put a "3". Choose the 4 most important situations. These are the ones which you are most interested in practicing and learning more information about during this course.

For these 4 most important situations, please explain here. For example, if you put "3" next to "bank": *I'd like to know how to open a bank account.* If you put "3" next to "restaurant": *I'd like to know how to order from a menu.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____
