

TENNESSEE LANGUAGE CENTER

Group Foreign Language Classes

Student Orientation Guide

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CLASS INFORMATION

TLC TEACHING METHOD

At TLC, we encourage our teachers to use the Communicative Method. This method is different from traditional teaching methods in that the classroom environment is student-centered versus teacher-centered.

In the communicative classroom, students are in charge of their own learning and teachers are facilitators. The teachers set up presentations, exercises, and directions, but students are active participants—doing the majority of the communication and interaction.

Not only does this method increase students' fluency, it also leads students to an increased sense of confidence in using the language. In this setting, students practice real-life situations (e.g., giving directions, making requests, giving advice, etc.) and complete meaningful tasks.

This method promotes the use of the language of study from the very beginning levels in order to "immerse" students in the language. Our goal at TLC is to provide our students with the necessary skills to communicate in the language as soon as possible.

Some students who have had little or no background in languages or have experienced a more traditional approach to learning (with more frequent use of English in the classroom) may be intimidated by this.

HOMEWORK, OUTSIDE STUDY

Your teacher will assign homework throughout the term (it may be every week, or sporadically, depending on the language, level, and teacher). We encourage you to complete the homework assignments and study some outside of class so you can have more than just two hours of language practice each week. Try doing a small amount of homework or study each day instead of cramming right before your class. Write down any questions you have while doing your homework so you can ask fellow students or your teacher.

Be sure to exchange contact information with other students so you can ask each other questions about assignments and help each other study throughout the week. If you have a study technique or idea that is helpful for you, please share that with your teacher, fellow classmates, and TLC administration. We love hearing about new ways to improve language skills!

LANGUAGE LEVELS AND CLASSROOM HOURS

If you have placed yourself in a level, or need help placing yourself in a level, please contact TLC to speak with an instructor who can help you determine which level is best for you.

TLC's group foreign language classes are split into three levels: Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced. Each level has three sections: Beginning 1, 2, 3, and 4; Intermediate 1, 2, 3, and 4; and Advanced 1, 2, 3, and 4. There is an introductory level in Spanish called "Absolute Beginner's Spanish" for students who have had no previous experience learning Spanish or any other language. Some languages also have Advanced+ levels such as Advanced Conversation or Advanced Grammar Review.

If you were placed in a class that you find too fast or too slow-paced, would like to be challenged more or you feel that the class is too difficult, talk to your instructor or to the Foreign Language Director. Your instructor might be able to accommodate your needs within the same class or suggest moving to a different class.

Towards the end of each term, your instructor will give you a short, rather informal, in-class assessment that will help you recognize how much you've learned during the term and which language points you might need to revise or pay more attention to. Although it may look like a test, your teacher will likely go over the assignment during the same class and might even let you grade it yourself. The purpose of the assignment is to let students understand and appreciate the learning process, let them know about the progress they have made and help the instructor set up the

syllabus for the next term. Your result on the assignment does not determine whether you move up to the next level or not, but it is wise to discuss your result with your teacher if you find out that you are far above or far below the average result in your class.

The global standard for levels of language learning is called the “Common European Framework” (CEF). You can find more information at <http://www.pearsonlongman.com/ae/cef/cefguide.pdf>

Teachers and administrators at TLC recently used this framework to evaluate how the levels at TLC measure up to the global standard. The CEF splits language students into three sections that can be divided into six levels:

A. Basic User

A1 Breakthrough or beginner

A2 Waystage or elementary

B. Independent User

B1 Threshold or intermediate

B2 Vantage or upper intermediate

C. Proficient User

C1 Effective Operational Proficiency or advanced

C2 Mastery or proficiency

Here is an excerpt from the Teacher’s Guide to the Common European Framework:

At first glance, the CEF appears to be like a staircase with each step the same distance from the next (A1 to A2 to B1 to B2, etc.). This might seem to indicate that each step or level should be achieved in an equal amount of time. But learning a language is like climbing a mountain: the ascent gets harder the higher you climb. It does not take the same amount of time to reach each level. It will take longer to get to B2 from B1 than it does to get to A2 from A1. A principle reason for this is that as the learner progresses with the language, he or she needs to acquire a larger range of language knowledge and competencies.

Although individual students will progress at slightly different rates, the general understanding for the number of classroom hours it takes to reach each of these levels is the following:

A1 Approximately 100 total classroom hours

A2 Approximately 200 total classroom hours

B1 Approximately 400 total classroom hours

B2 Approximately 600 total classroom hours

C1 Approximately 800 total classroom hours

C2 Approximately 1,200 total classroom hours

MATERIALS

Your teacher will use the textbook as a guide and supplement it with outside resources. Most classes require you to purchase a book. You may purchase most books online through TLC or another seller.

Books can be helpful guides, but it is our hope that they are not the focus of each lesson. We have done our best to find suitable books that are affordable and fit with our levels and students. If you'd like to find out more about why we've chosen the books we use in our classes, we'll be happy to talk. We are always open to hearing feedback from students.

REFUND POLICY

TLC reserves the right to cancel a class if fewer than four (4) students paying full tuition are enrolled. If TLC cancels the class and cannot accommodate you with another class option, your payment will be fully refunded.

Credit card transactions will be credited to the original card used.
Refund checks will be mailed for cash or check transactions. This process takes 3 to 4 weeks.

Student-requested withdrawals must be made at least seven (7) days before the start date of a class in order to:

- a. receive a refund less a \$25 dollar administrative fee, or
- b. receive credit for the full fee to the student's TLC account. TLC credit does not expire and can be used as follows:
 1. toward a custom class (minimum of 10 hours)
 2. to purchase class materials
 3. to transfer to another student or a gift certificate
 4. as a tax-deductible donation to our Scholarship fund

No refunds or TLC credits will be issued for student withdrawals once classes have begun or for missed classes.

STUDENT INFORMATION

ARRIVAL

Please arrive to class on time, or 5-10 minutes before, if possible. If you are going to be late, please let your teacher know in advance. You can call TLC and leave a message for your teacher to let them know you'll be late. It's important for teachers to know so they can plan accordingly.

Even if you arrive a few minutes late, it can affect your level of participation, and what you will ultimately get out of the class. It may also disrupt the lesson and concentration of your fellow classmates. Try your best to arrive a little bit early so you can prepare for class by reviewing your notes, refreshing yourself about the last class, looking over your homework, etc.

ATTENDANCE

Your attendance in class each week is an important part of making sure you and your classmates have the best and most effective learning experience. Since your class only meets a maximum of 12 times (24 hours) in one term, it's important for you to be present every week—especially during the Beginning and Intermediate Levels when you're still learning the foundations of the language.

We understand that there may be emergency situations or other important commitments that keep you from coming to class. In this case, please let your teacher know as far ahead as possible so he/she can plan the lesson based on the number of students present. Your teacher will also be able to give you information about what you will miss the week that you are gone so you can keep up with the rest of the students and not fall behind.

If you or your teacher feels that you are falling behind because of a missed class, you can contact TLC to arrange a 30-60 minute private lesson with your teacher to help you catch up. TLC will offer a discounted rate of \$35/hour (\$17.50/half-hour) per student for makeup sessions.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Some students may be faster processors than others when it comes to learning language. Please be as understanding as possible and know that having different types of students in the same class can benefit you. Slower processing students can learn from observing faster processing students. Students who process more quickly can improve their skills by encouraging slower processing students when working in small groups and pairs.

When it comes to class participation, please keep the following in mind:

1. Try to speak up in class when it's appropriate, but please listen to other students and give everyone a chance to equally participate.
2. Since some students process a little slower, having some a brief period of silence after a question is asked is usually a good thing.
3. Respect the different views of your fellow classmates and listen carefully even if you disagree so you can comment in a way that shows you have been paying attention to every speaker.
4. Be courteous and try not to interrupt or speak while others are speaking.
5. Remember that not everyone feels comfortable participating. This skill takes some practice in order to become comfortable. If you'd like ideas on how to participate more in class, speak with your teacher or TLC administration. We'd be happy to give you some helpful suggestions.

To find out more about your individual learning style, and to help you understand that there are several different types of learning styles present in your classroom, please fill out the questionnaire found here: <http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilswweb.html>.

STUDENT "CODE" OF RESPECT

I AGREE TO DO THE FOLLOWING...

- Arrive early or on time to class
- Trust my teacher and her/his decisions, and remember that my teacher has a plan for the class
- Be friendly to my fellow classmates
- Speak with my teacher or the FL Department Director before class if I have suggestions, questions, or concerns about my class

I AGREE TO NOT DO THE FOLLOWING...

- Arrive late!
- Leave in the middle of the class
- Act like I am the teacher
- Record (audio and/or video) the class without asking the teacher, the FL Director and fellow students for consent
- Overtly voice any criticism of my teacher, fellow students, or class

TLC INFORMATION

PARKING AND ENTRANCE PROCEDURES

1. Park on the French Landing side if your class begins at 6:00PM
2. Park in any space that does not say "RESERVED"
3. You may enter the main lobby from either side of the building
4. Once you enter the building, please check in at the security station in the main lobby
5. Have your student's ID, driver's license (or other gov't issued photo ID) or TN State ID ready and tell the guards that you are a TLC student
6. TLC is on the first floor, and our staff will be available to show you to your classroom the first week.

You are encouraged to obtain a TLC student ID. IDs are free of charge and the procedure is very easy: simply submit your digital, passport-style photo to studentid@TLC.org (make sure to include your name in the email) and pick up your ID at the front desk next time you come for your class. If you submit the photo before the term starts, you will receive your ID at the guard station when you come for your first class.

WEATHER POLICY

When there is severe weather, please watch **Channel 4 or Channel 5** to see if state government offices or TLC will be closed. Your teacher or another staff member will contact you via email to let you know if your class is canceled. If you feel that it is unsafe for you to come in, please contact your teacher and TLC to inform them as soon as possible.

COFFEE, SNACKS, FOOD, AND CANDY

TLC is happy to provide candy in each classroom as well as coffee and tea in the kitchen. Soda and snacks are also available for all students. We appreciate your donations to our snack fund to help us continue to provide these options for our students. Just drop your donation into the plastic container near the coffee and the snacks.

If you come to your class directly after work and need to bring your lunch or dinner, feel free. If you arrive before your class starts, you may eat in your classroom (if it's not occupied). There is also a small break-room table near the kitchen that you are welcome to use. Your teacher may allow eating during their class, but please ask them ahead of time if that is ok.

TLC CONTACT INFORMATION

Tennessee Foreign Language Institute

220 French Landing Drive

Nashville, TN 37243

615.741.7579, fax: 615.741.7331

www.tfli.org

Maya Campbell, Administrative Officer/ Senior Spanish Instructor

maya.campbell@tennessee.edu

615.741.7579 x106

OTHER TLC SERVICES

Private and Workplace Foreign Language Classes

In addition to group classes, TLC offers customized language classes which give students maximum flexibility to choose the schedule, location, and pace of their class. We can arrange custom classes for individuals, groups, businesses, and children. For more information, contact fl@tfli.org.

Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) Certification Course

TLC is the leading provider of TESL Certification in Tennessee. Graduates of TLC's TESL program meet the criteria to become IELTS examiners for ELS and the British Council. TLC's 150-hour TESL Certificate Program includes training in the fundamentals of TESL, with the purpose of preparing its graduates to teach ESL in a variety of classroom settings. For more information, visit www.tfli.org or contact esl@tfli.org.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Classes

TLC's ESL teachers are graduates of our TESL Certification Course. Our instructors create effective lessons for students at all levels of proficiency. In order to prepare for real world situations, our classrooms have an 'English only' policy. Teachers convey meaning through visual clues, props, gestures, pictures and context. At the end of each class, students are equipped for practical situations like going to the grocery store or visiting the doctor's office.

Interpretation and Translation Services

TLC offers in-person interpretation services in over 60 languages and telephonic interpretation services in over 200 languages. We also offer written translation of documents in over 90 languages. Our professional interpreters and translators are carefully vetted and selected for their native language fluency, experience, training and cultural sensitivity to ensure high-quality linguistic support for our clients. TLC also offers professional development workshops for experienced interpreters and translators as well as introductory workshops for people interested in working in the field. For more information, contact its@tfli.org.

TLC'S MISSION

The Tennessee Language Center, an agency of the State of Tennessee established in 1986 by the General Assembly and dedicated to responsive public service, strives to facilitate intercultural communication through the provision of quality language instruction, translation and interpretation services, professional development for interpreters, translators and language instructors, and cultural awareness programs, which are designed to meet the needs of the state

government and its employees, the business community, foreign language educators, and the public.