

How to Spin a Pen: Lesson Plan

Learner Profile:

Learners are 3 students from the University of Toronto Mississauga with varying programs of study.

Students are expected to know how to hold a pen when writing, as well as possess basic finger dexterity.

Learning Goals:

- Understand how pen spinning works
- Learn how to spin a pen

Success Criteria:

- Students can demonstrate how to spin a pen smoothly

Lesson Materials:

- 4 pens (1 for demonstration, 3 for deliberate practice)

Instructions:

Introduction (Estimated <1 min)

- Arrange the students to sit around a desk in a circle and join them
- Try to keep the lesson casual
- Start the lesson by saying "Today I will be teaching you guys how to spin a pen"
- Distribute the pens
- Elaborate that you will teach them a basic pen spinning trick, where the pen is always held on to and just rotates around the index and middle finger
- Demonstrate by slowly imitating the motion of the pen spinning with your other hand

Getting into the proper position (Estimated <1 min)

- Explain to the students that you will show them how to quickly get into the right position to spin then pen starting from a regular pen hold
- Tell the students the following while demonstrating with your own pen. Invite them to try while you are explaining.
 - Start with a normal pen grip. Emphasize that the pen is in between the index and middle finger
 - Securing the pen between the two fingers, extend the fingers until the base of the pen is snug in the area between the thumb and index finger
 - Keep the pen in place with the thumb. Readjust the index and middle fingers by lowering them to about halfway along the pen. The fingers

should come into contact with the pen at around the knuckles of the fingertips

- Tell them that this is the starting position for the pen spin and that they are ready to move on to actually spinning the pen

Spinning the Pen (Estimated 2 min)

- Say that spinning the pen is split into 3 steps. Mention that keeping the fingers relaxed and the index finger is the key to get good movement of the pen
- Like before, explain the steps while demonstrating and have the students try as well:
 - First step: While the pen is wedged in between the thumb and index, push the pen away from your thumb by pushing your index finger against it. The pen should spring out and rotate until almost halfway
 - Your index fingers should be slightly in front of the middle finger
 - Second step: At the same time, move the index finger backward and the middle finger forward
 - If this step is performed while the pen is moving from the first step, the pen should make a full rotation around your fingers
 - The final step is to bend your index and middle finger to get the pen back to the original position

Assessment (Estimated 1 min)

- Students will practice while being observed
- If a student is struggling, help as necessary. A couple possible mistakes they could be making include:
 - Fingers are too stiff
 - Fingers are placed too low or too high on the pen
 - Pen is placed too low (i.e. the base of the pen is blocked by the hand so the pen cannot swing out)
 - The second pen spin step is performed too late after the first step