

Module 15 of 16 modules in this unit

Student levels explained

Course: US TEFL Methodology Course

Unit 1: Understanding teacher and student roles

We've shown you what the seven student levels are, but it's time to go into a little more depth about what each level actually entails.

In each of the boxes below you'll see what typically identifies a student at that level of ability, in terms of what they can do, and what they will be learning at that stage.

Hopefully this will help you understand how to identify a student's level and how to prepare lesson plans to help them progress.

Click on the level to find out what the students can do and what they should be learning:

Beginner

What they can do

Students' knowledge at this level will range from knowing absolutely nothing to having picked up a few words or phrases (i.e. a False Beginner student). They will have no knowledge of

how to structure the language correctly.

What they should learn

- Personal basic information and introductions (name, age, family)
- Colours
- Numbers 1-100
- Asking about names and jobs
- Yes/no questions and short answers
- Present simple
- Telling the time
- Useful classroom language e.g. "I haven't got a pen".
- Pronunciation: Consonant clusters and other problematic areas – these are taught at all levels, but are essential at Beginner level.

Elementary

What they can do

They are improving quickly, getting to grips with basic tenses and able to communicate simply about general topics. There will still be lots of errors though, and new tenses and forms will require a lot of consolidation.

What they should learn

- The verb "to be" (am, is, are)
- Basic common adjectives

- Personal pronouns
- Possessive adjectives
- Present Simple
- Articles (the, a/an)
- I like/don't like + nouns/-ing forms
- There is / There are
- This, That, These, Those
- Possessives: 's
- Can/can't for ability
- Some and any
- Present continuous
- Past simple
- Comparatives and superlatives
- Adverbs of frequency
- "Wh" questions
- Present Continuous for future
- Prepositions of time and place
- Auxiliary verbs: be and do
- Conjunctions

Lower intermediate (or Pre-intermediate)

What they can do

Students at this level are growing in confidence with their tenses and are now learning lots of vocabulary, phrases and functions (what a word or phrase is used for and why).

What they should learn

- Past simple irregular verbs
- Future simple
- Future with going to
- Past continuous
- Auxiliary verbs: have and had
- Zero Conditional
- First Conditional
- Present perfect simple
- For, Since and Ago
- Should, May, Might, Have to, Must (modal verbs)
- Introduction to phrasal verbs
- So and such
- Question tags
- Quantifiers

Intermediate

What they can do

Students at this level are keen to use English, but not quite fluent yet. They have a good knowledge of grammar, but need to consolidate it further. Vocabulary is also strong here.

Students often feel they are stagnating at this stage, with lots of time spent on consolidating learning before moving on further, which can be frustrating for some.

What they should learn

- Transitive and intransitive verbs
- Present perfect continuous
- Unless
- Second Conditional
- Passive present and past
- Past perfect simple
- Past perfect continuous
- Gerund or infinitive
- Relative clauses and relative pronouns
- Verbs + preposition
- Causative “have sth done”
- Despite/in spite of
- Stop to /stop doing

Upper intermediate (or Post-intermediate)

What they can do

Students' English levels here are high and they should be able to communicate on a wide range of topics. There will still be mistakes though, particularly with use of idioms, phrasal verbs, etc.

What they should learn

- Third Conditional
- Mixed Conditionals

- Wishes and regrets
- Reported speech
- Future Continuous
- Future perfect simple
- Future perfect continuous
- Impersonal passives
- Prepositional phrases
- Would/used to

Advanced

What they can do

Students make fewer mistakes than at the post-intermediate stage and use the language confidently. They should have no problems studying at an English-speaking university.

What they should learn

- Developing speaking, writing, reading and listening skills
- Grammar consolidation
- Improving and expanding idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs

Proficiency

What they can do

Students at this level are as close to a native speaker as a student can get, and some may have spent some time living in a native English speaking country or environment. There should be little accent and near perfect use of the language. This level is often required for academic purposes, though it should be sufficient for most employment.

What they should learn

- Perfecting writing, reading, listening and speaking skills (particularly accent)
- Perfecting understanding of idioms, phrasal verbs and natural fluency