

Spanish Alphabet Unit Lesson Plans

Introduction

This Spanish Alphabet mini-unit is designed for five 50-minute class periods. At the end of this mini-unit students should be able to spell their names in Spanish, as well as other basic words (Spanish-speaking countries, other students' names, days of the week, the greetings and simple vocabulary they are already familiar with). Students are eager to learn how to spell their names in Spanish and they will all be eager to share and be proud of themselves that they can do it in Spanish.

This mini-unit focuses on developing listening and speaking skills, and therefore most activities students do will strengthen these skills. I use a song to teach the alphabet not only because they learned a song to learn their ABCs in English, but because it's catchy and students will learn all 30 letters quickly. Middle school students love learning anything in song.

Day 1 Lesson Plan

Objective

Students will use letters of the alphabet in order to correctly spell their names and Spanish words.

Materials

- ELMO document camera (or overhead projector)
- LCD projector
- Day 1 drill
- Sentence strips
- Magnetic tape
- The alphabet written on the board
- Day 1 Alphabet Vocabulary
- A class set of white boards with dry erase markers
- Day 1 Classwork
- Spanish alphabet song (military styles) by Barbara MacAurthur (on Youtube)

Instructional strategies

Whole class repetition, song

Concepts to be taught

- All 30 letters of the Spanish alphabet – A, B, C, CH, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, LL, M, N, Ñ, O, P, Q, R, RR, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z
- ¿Cómo se escribe tu nombre? *How do you spell your name?*
- Mi nombre se escribe *I spell my name*

Lesson Delivery

Introduction

- The drill is designed to both reinforce old learning and give students something to do as soon as they walk into the classroom in order to settle them down. This drill reinforces the previous day's learning and could be changed to any other previous vocabulary.
- I have the drill projected onto the screen as students walk in and I give them a half-sheet of paper on which to complete their drill. Give the students 2-3 minutes to complete the drill and then review it. Call on a student to read the objective. This allows students to see what they will be learning in the next 50 minutes. Students will be excited to learn how to spell their names.

Guided Practice

- Put on Barbara MacArthur's Spanish alphabet song on youtube and play it twice. The first time just let students watch it. They will catch on to repeating and start singing along. I chose this song because it repeats 3 times, it plays all the letters I want to teach (it includes ch, ll, and rr), and it encourages students to sing along, which is what students really need in order to truly learn the alphabet. Singing it faster and faster also makes it fun for the students.
- I have the letters of the alphabet written on the board before the lesson begins to reference throughout the class period. Introduce the question for the day: "¿Cómo se escribe tu nombre?" Have students repeat the phrase, at first a few words at a time, and then as a whole question. Repeat several times until it rolls off their tongues easily. I like to challenge them to say it quickly! Show the sentence strip with magnetic tape on the back so it easily sticks to the board. Then introduce the answer "Mi nombre se escribe". Have students repeat several times again until it is easy to say and show the sentence strip. Then explain in Spanish what it means – I spell my name (my last name!) several times for the students and I point to each letter on the board as I say it. They will figure out that they are spelling their names, and you can refer back to the objective to reinforce that this is indeed the lesson.

Independent Practice

- Have students turn to a partner (this is a routine I set in my classroom from the first day of school) and practice asking and spelling their names. Allow 2 minutes. Then call on a few students to ask their partner and spell their name for the class. I usually have half the class demanding to be next to spell their names!
- Pass out the Alphabet Vocabulary sheet. I have students write the phrases twice.
- Pass out the Day 1 classwork. The first part is a listening. I choose students in the class, or students in other classes that they know, and I spell their names. They have to write the letters as I say them. I speak very slowly and repeat the letters several times. Some students may call out and guess whose name I am spelling before I finish, which I discourage.
- The second part of the classwork is a speaking activity. Students are to walk around the classroom and ask their peers, in Spanish, how to spell their names, and write the letters as they hear them. You will need to stress that this activity is to be completed entirely in Spanish. Allow 4-5 minutes for students to complete this activity.

Modifications

- Have students complete the listening activity on white boards. This depends on time allowances, as it takes longer to pass out and collect white boards and markers than it does to pass out handouts. It also allows the teacher to spell more names than the 6 blanks on the handout.
- Some classes may have trouble with the listening activity. I draw spaces on the board for the number of letters I'm going to say (like hangman) and I point to each space as I say the letter so they know when I am repeating a letter, when there are two of the same letter, or when I am starting from the beginning of the word again.
- Students may complain that they don't know how they can learn 30 letters in one day or that they don't know what "pe" is. I stress that there are really only a few letters that are different from English – G, J, LL, Ñ, RR, Y, Z. Students need to be trained to stop for a second and think about what "pe" is before becoming frustrated.

Evaluation

- As the exit ticket for the day, call on random students in groups or rows, however you have desks arranged, to spell their names in Spanish. Alternatively, show and sing the Alphabet Song again on youtube.

Follow-up

The Day 2 lesson reinforces the letters of the alphabet learned in Day 1 and focuses on sound discrimination (for example: paso vs. peso).

Day 2 Lesson Plan

Objectives

- Students will use letters of the alphabet in order to correctly spell their names and Spanish words.
- Students will use letters of the alphabet in order to correctly identify letters in listening activities.

Materials

- ELMO document camera (or overhead projector)
- LCD projector
- Day 2 drill
- The alphabet written on the board
- Recorder with the listening on the classwork pre-recorded
- Day 2 Classwork
- Spanish alphabet song (military styles) by Barbara MacAurthur (on Youtube)

Instructional strategies

Whole class repetition, song

Concepts to be taught

- Sound discrimination (for example: paso vs. peso)
- Reinforcement of the alphabet

Lesson Delivery

Introduction

Give the students 2-3 minutes to complete the drill and then review it. Call on several students to spell their names. Call on a student to read the objective.

Guided Practice

- Play the Spanish alphabet song on youtube for students to sing along and review again.
- Review the vowels A, E, I, O, U and point out the difference in pronunciation in Spanish so students can successfully complete the sound discrimination activity on the classwork. Examples to point out are pAso versus pEso versus pIso, and mAs versus mEs. Students will have the most trouble with the Spanish E and I.
- Have students repeat the question “¿Cómo se escribe tu nombre?” and the answer “Mi nombre se escribe”. Have students turn to a partner and practice spelling their name. Call on individuals to share after allowing students to practice for 1-2 minutes.

Independent Practice

- Pass out the classwork. Read each word on the listening script twice and review after the last one. It can be helpful to have the listening pre-recorded so you can monitor the class better during the listening and the recording also ensures that every class hears the same thing.
- The second activity is also a listening. It can help students if you point to the space of the letter you are saying so they can keep up. Using words they are already familiar with also helps them. Most of them will figure out the “palabra secreta” before you get to the last word.
- The third activity on the classwork is a writing activity. It is designed to keep students busy so you can individually assess students’ ability to spell their names in Spanish. It allows for a lot of practice, which can be shortened if there are time constraints. While students are completing the writing portion of the classwork, I walk around the room and individually ask students to spell their names in Spanish and give them participation points for this assessment.

Modifications

- The teacher could spell words more than twice for listening activities. Some students may benefit from hearing letters or words three or four times.
- The teacher may find it easier to have students come up to her desk to spell their names during the writing portion of the classwork, rather than walking around herself. Also, this quick assessment could count as a quiz grade rather than participation points. This activity should be modified depending on what the teacher finds to be easiest.

Evaluation

Having students individually spell their names will function as an evaluation.

Follow-up

Students will make an Alphabet book, reinforcing the letters of the alphabet and also getting a preview of vocabulary they will learn in Spanish 1.

Day 3 Lesson Plan

Objective

Students will use a Spanish-English dictionary and powerpoint in order to create alphabet books for each letter of the Spanish alphabet.

Materials

- Day 3 drill
- Alphabet Book Rubric
- Alphabet Book Example
- Alphabet Book Rough Draft
- A class set of Spanish-English dictionaries in the back of your school system's textbook (I use *¡Exprésate!*)
- 3 days in a computer lab or library with enough computers for each student to have their own powerpoint

Lesson Delivery

Introduction

Give the students 2-3 minutes to complete the drill and then review it. Call on a student to read the objective.

Guided Practice

- Pass out the Alphabet Book Rubric and explain the project to students. They will be using powerpoint to make Alphabet Books in which each slide has a letter (all 30 letters in alphabetical order!) and a word that begins with that letter (some letters will be exceptions) with a picture of what that word is. There is an example of the letter J on the rubric with “jardin” and a picture of a garden. While *garden* does not start with a J, the Spanish word does! Students will learn a few new words, get a preview of vocabulary they will learn throughout the year, and can quickly guess the meaning of *jardín*.
- You may also want to show students the powerpoint Alphabet Book example to illustrate how each slide will be laid out.
- Explain how the project will be graded. I assigned this project on September 20th and allowed 3 class periods for students to complete their rough draft and finish the powerpoint by the end of the 3rd class period (September 22nd).

Independent Practice

- Pass out the Alphabet Book Rough Draft handout, as well as textbooks for each student. Direct students to the Spanish-English dictionary section. You will want to avoid Spanish-English dictionaries because they have profanity, which students will not find in their textbook. Allow about 30 minutes for students to complete their rough drafts.
- Explain to students that they are to find two words for each letter and they have to use words they can find a picture for. *A* means *to*, as in “I’m going *to* the store”, but this is not a word you can find a picture for. *Abuelo* (grandfather) is a much better choice for a letter A word.
- I have students choose two words for each letter so they have a back-up in case they cannot find a suitable picture for a word they chose.
- Students have to write the English meaning on their rough draft so they know what to find a picture for. This word will not appear on their powerpoint.
- Some letters are not at the beginning of any words (ñ, rr, x). I allowed students to choose words with those letters anywhere in the word and I made lists of good words for students to choose.

Modifications

- Students may have trouble finding two words for each letter. Allow them to choose only one word, but ensure it is a good word they will be able to find a picture for.
- Students that are struggling with the rough draft may need to be paired up with a faster student that has already finished.

Follow-up

Students will be in the computer lab or library to complete their Alphabet Books for two 50-minute periods.

Days 4-5 Lesson Plan

Have students complete their Alphabet Books by the end of Day 5.

References

MacArthur, B. [provdoll]. (2009, Jan 3). *Spanish alphabet song (military style) by Barbara MacArthur* [video file]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUcu9PUh9_A

