

TEACHERS' GUIDE

FOR

WELCOME TO VERMONT:  
ENGLISH FOR WORKING  
AND LIVING

## CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Activity Guide	5
Alphabet & Pronunciation	13
Transliteration	14
Further Resources	15

## INTRODUCTION

It doesn't take anyone who's taught English to migrant farmworkers in Vermont long to discover that there are no existing textbooks that are generally useful. There are many resources for teaching English as a foreign language—an inundation, online and off—but nothing one can turn to as a basic curriculum.

The textbook has been designed as a resource specifically for Spanish-speaking migrant workers in Vermont and for those who wish to teach English to them but don't have the time it takes to organize teaching materials from scratch. The lessons begin with very basic language and gradually increase in level and difficulty. Each new lesson builds on the last, reviewing old themes and introducing fresh material.

The chapters are organized around conversations that the students, generally from Mexico, would actually have. The topics are intended either to be practically useful or to present relevant subjects for discussion; to encourage students to engage in meaningful dialogue with their teachers and each other. The book aims to familiarize students with the community in which they live, and to offer a view into some common American traditions and customs.

While the lessons are sequential, there is no reason not to skip around if students are interested in a later topic or it seems pertinent. You should feel free to adapt and modify your lesson plans as you deem necessary for the level of your students and the size of your class. And it's always a good idea to consult with students about what they're interested in being taught. Be sensitive to the fact that some students may be minimally literate or illiterate. (If they are reluctant to read aloud, for example, do not insist.) You may be able to tutor the student separately in reading or find someone who can. Especially in the beginning, speak slowly and clearly and don't use extraneous words.

It is helpful to know some Spanish (to make arrangements for subsequent meetings, if nothing else), but this is not an absolute necessity. There are others around who can help to facilitate the teaching. Some people find that teaching in pairs—with one person able to converse in Spanish and the other not—can be quite fruitful.

It's important to remember, in teaching these particular students, that most of them get little opportunity to practice speaking English outside of class-time. Many will not have contact with English speakers on a regular basis, and even if they do, that contact may remain rudimentary. Thus these English lessons differ from typical language classes, in which it's reasonable to expect that students meet frequently enough to develop facility (as in a

college classroom) or else practice outside of class (if they're in the country in which the language being taught is spoken).

A lesson for these migrant workers thus functions not only as a class but as a social occasion, important in itself, for itself. You may be one of the few people—most likely one of the few Americans—with whom they have regular social contact. So don't set out to teach verb conjugations and spelling in isolation, even if that's how you learned a language. Insert these things as needed and requested, by all means; the more often grammatical structures can be introduced as part of conversations about real life issues the more likely they are to be remembered. But the primary aim of these classes is spoken communication, not heightened literacy or facility in writing, even though these may improve along the way.

An hour to an hour and a half tends to be enough. These students are tired. They've already worked long hours by the time class time rolls around. So plan a class that includes several different kinds of activities. Play games. Read aloud from simple children's books with pictures. Bring food or have a cooking lesson. Most of all, talk, and help the students to be comfortable speaking. Conversations should be encouraged among the students as well as between them and the teacher.

And don't worry about appropriate training. This is not to say that it's not helpful, but before there were training courses with an ever changing list of acronyms (CELTA , TEFL, TESOL, ESL, and so on) humans encountered other humans who didn't speak the same language. They didn't say, "Oh, excuse me while I take a crash course from Berlitz"; if they wanted to communicate they smiled, held out a gift and said its name. Wanting to talk and listen is the one most important precondition for being successful in teaching a language. Have fun with your teaching, most importantly. The experience of teaching these particular students is an enriching and gratifying one.

The appendices offer additional material, such as a pronunciation guide and sample conjugations of regular and irregular verbs; Dairy, Agricultural, and Health vocabularies and some sample medical forms. The Workbook gives one page of practice for each lesson. *Further Resources* is our winnowing down of other resources we have found particularly useful and user-friendly.

We hope you find the material useful. Please feel free to contact us\* with questions or comments, including suggestions for additions to the *Resources* list.

Kathryn Kramer & Sarah Ashby

\*kkramer@middlebury.edu

## Activity Guide for Lessons

### Lesson 1: Introductions

1. Start this lesson by introducing yourself, and have each student do the same. Add in different greetings and "How are you?" Have them ask questions of each other as well. Try repeating the statements in the third person. "How is Luis? He is fine..."
2. When you reach the "Where are you from?" section, show a map of your home state/country to the students and explain where you are from. Encourage the students to show you where they are from on the Mexican map. Finally, show the students a map of Vermont and the local area, and point out where they are living now.

### Lesson 2: Family

1. For number recognition, a simple game of bingo is always a great activity. You can draw a bingo board, or here is a website that lets you construct them:  
[http://www.teach-nology.com/web\\_tools/materials/bingo/](http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/materials/bingo/)
2. Draw out a family tree, or bring in family photos of your own family and construct a tree, giving their ages.
3. Ask each student to draw out their own family tree. Have your students explain their families to you. Ask simple, pointed questions: "Do you have a brother?" "How many sisters do you have?"

### Lesson 3: Describing People and Feelings

1. Show the students pictures of people in magazines, and ask them to describe the physical appearance/emotions of the people. Ask them to act out a feeling and have the others guess which it is.
2. Ask the students to describe how they are feeling right now, or in various true-to-life situations. Work with "because." Supply vocabulary as they need it. If they are ready  
For it, try the "When X happens, I am \_\_\_\_\_"  
construction.

### Lesson 4: Money

1. This is a good lesson for role-playing as a shopkeeper/customer. Bring in diverse items and have your students take turns asking how much each item costs.
2. Bring spare change to class and ask students to take turns assembling different amounts.

3. Dictate phone numbers and have them write them down; give them phone numbers to dictate to each other.

### Lesson 5: In the House

1. In order to work on vocabulary for this lesson, bring index cards with the names of rooms and objects written on them. Tape the index cards around the house, and practice having students "go to" different rooms or objects, or "put" things in different places. Let them take turns giving the directions.
2. Draw a floor plan of your house. Label each room. Have the students take turns describing which items would be in each room: "The shower is in the bathroom."
3. Practice the prepositions with placement of objects, with the locutions "Where is....?" and "Is the \_\_\_\_\_ in/under, etc. the \_\_\_\_\_?"

### Lesson 6: Parts of the Body

1. Play Simon Says with your class, asking students to touch different body parts.
2. Have students practice telling you that different body parts hurt. Point to different numbered body parts in the book. Have them ask each other what's wrong and report back to the class on another person.

### Lesson 7: Time of Day

1. Bring in an analog clock or watch to class. Move the hands to different times, and ask the students what time it is or draw a clock on the board.
2. Write out your daily routine, and have your students do the same: "6:00 I get up", etc. Take turns telling your schedule to each other.

### Lesson 8: Calendar and Seasons

1. Bring a calendar to class (can be a day planner), and highlight different days. Take turns asking the student, "What day is it?" and have them answer giving the month and the day.
2. Play a game guessing each others' birthdays. As clues, your students can give the season in which their birthday falls, the month, and a set of days. Ex: "My birthday is in the spring. It is in March. It is between March tenth and March twentieth."
3. Ask them what happens in various seasons.
4. Practice past tense with simple sentences. "I am 25. Last year I was 24. When I was 7, I had a red bicycle."

### Lesson 9: Weather and Days of the Week

1. Show the students a map of the world or photos from a travel magazine. Point to different locales, and have the students imagine and describe the weather there.
2. Make a list of things that happen in various seasons—ask them to contribute. (New vocabulary.)
3. Make a grid showing Yesterday/Today/Tomorrow and give examples of past, present, and future statements.

### Lesson 10: Food

1. Begin by having everyone describe their favorite food(s). Practice talking about favorite and least favorite foods using the constructions “I like” and “I don’t like”. Then have students talk about the foods that others in the group like/dislike.
2. Point to different foods on the food pyramid and ask students, “Do you like ...?”
3. Talk about liking/not liking other things: seasons, places, activities...

### Lesson 11: Grocery Shopping I

1. Ask students to imagine the aisles in their own grocery store and sketch them out on a piece of paper. Ask questions, such as: “Where is the fruit?”
2. Draw up a sample shopping list and hand it to the students. Pretend to be a grocery store employee, and have the students practice asking you to direct them to items on the list.
3. Have a conversation emphasizing the difference between “need” and “want” (not so apparent in the conversations in this chapter).

### Lesson 12: Grocery Shopping II

1. Pretend to be the grocery store cashier, and practice dictating prices to students. Have them take these roles with each other. You can even bring in a few dollar and some change, and practice exchanging money with students. Make sure that they understand cash amounts orally.

### Lesson 13: Comparing and Measuring

1. Bring in a receipt, and have students compare the prices of items using comparative and superlatives.
2. Have students estimate their height and weight in feet/inches and pounds. Show photos of real people, and play a game where students guess their height and weight. (You can invent these numbers).
3. Give true/false statements involving comparatives and superlatives.

#### Lesson 14: Telephoning

1. Have students practice leaving oral telephone messages. You can even bring two cell phones, and use them to leave real voice messages. Let students listen to their own voice messages afterwards. Practice having them write down phone numbers and messages.
2. Practice simulated conversations with the emergency operator. Invent emergency situations, and ask students to relay those situations to the operator. This is a good lesson in which to emphasize clear pronunciation.

#### Lesson 15: In Town

1. Take a walk around the students' house and have students practice pointing out different features such as "front door" and "roof".
2. Engage students in a conversation about the differences/similarities between their house in their home country and their house in Vermont.
3. Asks students to collaborate to draw out a quick sketch of a downtown—either a town they know or one they make up—and write in store and building locations. Have the students talk about what they do in each location.
4. Practice the "I am going..." construction.

#### Lesson 16: Town and City

1. Engage students in talking about the travels they have done to different villages, towns, and cities. Encourage them to use the constructions, "I went" or "I didn't go".
2. Using the photocopied map, have students give each other oral directions to different stores and locations or draw a simple grid map on the board.

#### Lesson 17: In the Country

1. Bring a physical map of Vermont to class, and encourage students to point out different natural features and cities. Have them practice saying the names of natural features.
2. Ask students to describe the landscape surrounding their hometowns. They can even draw out rough maps if they want, to help them visualize their descriptions.
3. Practice the difference between "look" and "see."

#### Lesson 18: Giving Directions

1. Bring to class a map (it can be of your hometown, the student's town, College, etc.) and tell students you are a tourist visiting the town, and



- need to get from point x to point y. Students should practice giving detailed directions.
2. Play Simon Says with the students, using directional commands. This activity might require a bit of space, so you might want to take your class outside!

### Lesson 19: Health I

1. Make flash cards that list a group of symptoms. Distribute the flash cards to students, and tell them that they are patients suffering from the symptoms. Pretend you are a doctor, and ask students to practice describing their symptoms and complaints to you. Encourage students to use expressions of frequency by explaining to the doctor how long they have been suffering the symptoms.

### Lesson 20: Health II

1. Practice skits where students act alternatively as receptionists, patients, and doctors. Have the students practice booking appointments, explaining symptoms to a doctor, and asking questions about the diagnosis.
2. Bring to class a patient registration form (included in the *Appendices*, or can be found in any doctor's office). Practice with the students filling out the information in the form.

### Lesson 21: At the Dentist

1. Try the same activities as you did for Lesson 20, except substitute the doctor's office for a dentist's office.

### Lesson 22: Pharmacy

1. Bring in different medicine bottles and containers, and direct student's attention to the medicine labels on the back. Make sure students understand how to find directions for use, warnings, and the symptoms that the medicine alleviates.

### Lesson 23: Post Office

1. Bring in some sample stamps and show them to the students. Ask them to practice buying stamps and determining how many stamps they need for different postal prices.
2. Show students a customs label for international package mailing (can be obtained from any post office), and practice filling it out with them.
3. Show them how to format a letter and an envelope.

### Lesson 24: Wiring Money

1. Since they probably know more about this than you do, first ask them to describe what they do and then help them to clarify requests and responses.

### Lesson 25: Animals

1. Bring in flashcards with a picture or name of Vermont animals on each, or a book that shows these. Show the pictures to students, and ask students to name and describe the animal.
2. Find pictures of animals, and ask students to describe the qualities of the animal. Encourage them to use the new animal vocabulary: hair, fur, tail, paws, etc. and to talk about animals they have owned as livestock or pets, or would like to own.

### Lesson 26: Cows

1. As with wiring money, they are the experts here, even if they don't know the language. Ask students to teach you about the animal: to point different anatomical parts of the cow, describe the cow's daily routine, explain common cow illnesses, etc. Work with the *Glossary* so that they can find the terminology they need.
2. If it's easy, you can visit the barn and they can show you what they do. However, you should ask the farmer's permission to do this, and consult students first about contacting him/her. Some farmers do not want non-workers in a barn, for sanitary reasons among others.
3. Help them to create dialogues in which they discuss problems with their boss.
4. Discuss dairy farm issues in Vermont.

### Lesson 27: Jobs

1. Create flashcards that contain a sketch of a person, a name, and a profession, or take a deck of *Old Maid* cards to class and ask students to assume the character of the person on the card. Ask simple questions about their professions: "Is your job hard?" "Is your job enjoyable?"
2. Ask each student to say a few sentences about a past job, encouraging the use of the past tense.

### Lesson 28: Living in the United States I

1. Have students practice greeting each other as if they were good friends / relatives / in a formal work relationship / strangers.

2. Initiate a discussion on cultural differences between the United States and the students' home countries: marriage and divorce; religion; friendliness; formality/informality; attitudes towards children, et al.
3. Talk about geography, climate, and population in Mexico and the U.S.

#### Lesson 29: Living in the U.S. II

1. Bring in photos of national or state political figures and explain (simply) their jobs. Discuss policy issues in the U.S. and Vermont, particularly agricultural and immigration ones. Ask them about political issues in their home countries.

#### Lesson 30: Education

1. Take turns talking about a memorable school moment or your first day of school. Encourage students to talk about their favorite school subjects or teachers using the positive and negative past tense.
2. If students have children in the Vermont school system, talk about their experiences with this, including problems that may arise; role play discussions with teachers.

#### Lesson 31: Cooking

1. Bring in a simple recipe and ingredients to class, and incorporate a cooking session into the lesson. Have students figure out how to follow the recipe and complete the dish.
2. Ask them to teach you how to cook something.
3. Ask them to write down a recipe for something they like to cook.

#### Lesson 32: Music and Recreation

1. Bring in examples of different types of music, and play them for the students. Discuss with the students the genre of music, instruments used, and the music's significance in American history / contemporary culture. Have them discuss their tastes in music.
2. Discuss tastes in movies and other recreational activities.
3. Have them make up the story for a movie (aloud).

#### Lesson 33: Sports

1. Bring a sports magazine to class and have students practice naming the sports that appear. Talk to them about contemporary American athletes. Discuss what sports they like to play or watch on tv.
2. Ask the students to name their favorite athlete, and to construct a small anecdote about a memorable moment in that athlete's sports

career. Encourage them to use some of the vocabulary from this section.

#### Lesson 34: Clothing

1. Have students take turns describing what they are wearing, in terms of articles of clothing and colors. You can also bring in picture book or magazine and ask them to describe what people are wearing.
2. Pretend you are in a clothing store, and hand students note cards with cut-outs of articles on clothing on them. Have the students practice asking the "store assistants" for the articles of clothing.
3. Bring in a size chart (most clothing catalogues have them) and a measuring tape and have students measure themselves and/or each other for size.
4. Practice "these" and "those."

#### Lesson 35: Cleaning the House

1. Make two stacks of note cards: one with places and objects around the house and the other with household chores. Have students practice matching the chores with the house locations.
2. Practice phone calls to notify someone that something is wrong.

#### Lesson 36: Dining Out

1. Pretend that you and the class are at a restaurant. Divide the class up into customers/waiters, and practice ordering food and taking orders.
2. Bring in a real menu or two for the class to look at. Explain how the menu is divided into sections, important vocabulary, and pricing.

#### Lesson 37: Ordering Pizza

1. Hand out cards with quantities, sizes, and varieties of pizza on them. Using the cards, have the students pretend to call pizza restaurants and place orders.
2. Practice with students explaining where they live. Help them memorize the address, but also practice different ways to explain directions to the house using landmarks and other street names.

#### Lesson 38: Holidays

1. Take turns describing your favorite holidays. Encourage students to describe traditions and food that appear on their holidays.
2. Invent new holidays and discuss how they would be celebrated.

## Appendix A: Alphabet and Pronunciation

Have students repeat the alphabet aloud.

Have students spell their names. (You can use phonetic symbols, but students are not likely to remember these or find them useful. It may be more helpful to write a phonetic spelling (in letters) of difficult words: "ruff" for "rough" or "nock" for "knock," for example.)

You can try simple dictation of words, but be aware that some students may have difficulty with this, and do not insist.

Minimal pairs bingo (make your own grid) is useful for helping students to distinguish among similar-sounding words: *bat, vat, pat*, for example.

*The Migrant ESL Resource Booklet for Southeastern Michigan* has a very extensive, helpful, and thorough discussion of pronunciation issues for Spanish speakers:

<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/UMICH/eli/Home/Instruction/Migrant%20Workers/MigrantESLResourceBookletComplete.pdf>

## Transliteration

Transliteration is the system of notating sound phonetically in the learner's original language. Students will pronounce the transliteration as if they were reading Spanish, but it will sound—more or less—like English. Thus:

Vermont 911, where is your emergency?

/Vermant nain uan-uan, uer is yur emergenci?/

The only dialogue transliterated here is in Appendix F: *Calling 911*. The exchanges reproduced here are so important that we didn't want to leave out any method that might help people convey urgent need. We did not consider using transliteration in the textbook itself in part because of issues of space. We don't take a position on this issue, merely note here that there are varying schools of thought, often quite passionate, about the pros and cons of using transliteration. At one extreme is the belief that transliteration impedes learning, infantilizes the learner, and conveys the message that he or she is incapable of learning a new set of spelling and pronunciation rules (or lack of rules). At the other is the experience of teachers who have found transliteration to be the quickest and most effective means of encouraging learning, whose students have repeatedly told them how helpful it is, to the extent that some students request new vocabulary only if it is transliterated. Teachers who are interested in this should experiment with it and come to their own conclusions. One book that may be of interest to those wishing to explore transliteration further is *Illegal Alphabets and Adult Bilingualism: Latino Migrants Crossing the Linguistic Border* by Tomás Mario Kalmar.

## Further Resources

**<http://www.esl-galaxy.com/board.htm>**—downloadable board games, crossword puzzles, et al.

**<http://www.englishmedialab.com/>**—free English video lessons, online

**<http://shawnashapiro.com/juntos/>**—Middlebury College ESL website; one location of pdf file of this textbook and guide

**<http://danr.ucop.edu/ag-labor/Spanish-dictionary.PDF>**—technical words defined

**<http://escort.org/files/YAkit.pdf>**—“Starter kit” for teachers of migrant young adults

**<http://www.canr.msu.edu/vanburen/spanishdairy.pdf>** – dairy audiotape available from U of Michigan for \$20

**<http://www.eslcafe.com/>**—Dave’s ESL Café: one of the major ESL websites; huge amounts of information; many useful games  
<http://esl.about.com/?once=true&--About.com> – a good place for us to check our chapters against to see if we’ve missed things

**<http://www.englishclub.com/teach-english.htm>**—worksheets, games, etc.

**<http://www.eflclub.com/index2.html>** – worksheets, games, etc.

**<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/UMICH/eli/Home/Instruction/Migrant%20Workers/MigrantESLResourceBookletComplete.pdf>**— *Migrant ESL Resource Booklet for Southeastern Michigan*