

English at Primary school/

Teaching units for beginners: *That's me*

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Foreword

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Considering the fact, that I've been teaching English for two years in the so called "Wahlpflicht-" and "Wahlfach" I thought it would be a good idea to write about experiences I gained, about difficulties I had but above all about things which I think worked well.

My teaching methods definitely changed a lot after the seminars with Sally Kowanda and Jim Wingate. I used a lot of their ideas and English became more fun for me and more fun for the pupils.

The pupils I thought had one lesson a week for one semester. Three of four groups were beginners, that's why I would like to describe some possible teaching units for beginners.

I chose to start with the topic "That's me", because I think that it's much more interesting and emotionally involving to use a foreign language to talk about "real things" such as myself.

During the lesson I spoke only English. They learned quite well to listen carefully, to look at my gestures and facial expressions in order to understand the meaning of what I was saying. In addition to that, they found out pretty fast that many words were similar to Italian or German, and therefore they had additional elements they could use in order to understand. Many children tried hard to speak English by using the words they knew and by trying to convert German words into English.

According to what Jim Wingate said, I tried to let the children experience new words visually (see the object, action or picture) , kinesthetically (touch the object, point to the picture, do the action) and audially (hear the new words many times said expressively). I tried also to let them say the words actively, audially and visually by naming the object, the action, the picture when they see it, audially and kinesthetically by naming the

object as they touch it, naming it as they point to the picture or do the action.

Teaching units for beginners

“That’s me”

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What's your name?

Educational aims:

- *relieve the pupils of their worries/ increase their self-confidence and curiosity*
- *pupils can say what their name is and they can ask the others about their name*

- Introduction

- At the beginning of the very first lesson we sit in a circle, I introduce myself and I talk briefly about the way I learn languages. I tell them that it's not important to understand every single word, because if we use all elements concerning communication as gestures, facial expressions or the voice and obviously the words we already know, we usually do understand a big part of what a person says in a foreign language.

I say this in German, then I continue in English.

- In order to let them know that they already know many English words or expressions, I take a big poster and I write down all words they tell me. Usually I need more than one poster...

▶ What's your name?

As we sit in the circle I write the sentence MY NAME IS... and the question WHAT'S YOUR NAME? on two coloured sheets of paper and I put them in the middle of the circle. Then I take a softball and start by saying:

"My name is..., and what's your name?"

I throw the ball to a pupil, who has to go on.

► I make cards with English names for girls and for boys and stick them on the board.

John	Andrea	Kathrin	Jenny	Kathy
Jane	Steve	Jack	Nancy	
Bob	Mary	William	Franc	
Anne	Brian	George	Marc	
Wendy	Sarah	Dorothy		Janet
Michael	Harry	Anthony	Carol	

I read the names and the pupils repeat. They recognise that many names they already know have a different pronunciation in English.

On this occasion I want them to exercise sounds which are unusual for German speakers as the *th* in *Dorothy* or *Anthony* or the soft sound in *George, Jane, Jack*.

► Every child goes to the board and chooses a name.

Teacher: *Go to the board and take one name. Now it's your English name!*

Pupil: *Brian*.

Teacher: *Is it a boy or a girl?*

Children: *A boy*.

Teacher: *O.K. Brian! Take your name card and sit down again.*

As soon as every child has an English name:

Teacher: *What's your English name?*

Pupil 1: *Sarah*.

Teacher: *Say, my English name is Sarah.*

Pupil 1 to pupil 2: *What's your English name?*

Pupil 2: *Steven.*

Teacher: (whispers) *My English name is Steven.* Etc.

► I use the question: *What's your name?* to exercise the *w*- sound. In addition to that I use a little wordplay:

Teacher: *Say with me! Willi whistles. O.K. Let's whistle altogether!*

Wendy whistles.

William whistles.

Winnie whistles.

Willi and Wendy whistle.

William and Winnie whistle.

They all whistle. Come on! Let's whistle altogether!

Games:

► Half of the children sit in a circle on their chairs. The rest of the pupils move to the music outside the circle. As soon as the music stops they have to stop behind a classmate:

Pupil 1: *What's your name?*

Pupil2: *My name is...*

Pupil 1: *Hello,...*

► I stick a name card with an English name on the back of the children so that they can't see it. I also write all those names on the board. The pupils move around and try to find out their name:

Pupil1: *Hello!*

Pupil2: *Hello!*

Pupil 1: *Is my name...?*

Pupil2: *Yes/No*

Children who found out their name erase the name on the board and sit down.

► For further activities which require a partner I use this chant:

That's the way we do it

(altogether in a circle)

Clap, snap, clap, snap

Ra-ta-ta, ta-ta-ta tum
That's the way we do it;
we do it like a drum

And we listen, we listen
To what is going on
And say "Hey! It's great to do it
with you!
Come on, come on, come on!"

(clap and snap)

(clap on your knees)
(hands on your hips)
(clap on your knees)

(hand behind your left and right ear)
(point to different children)
(point to a partner)

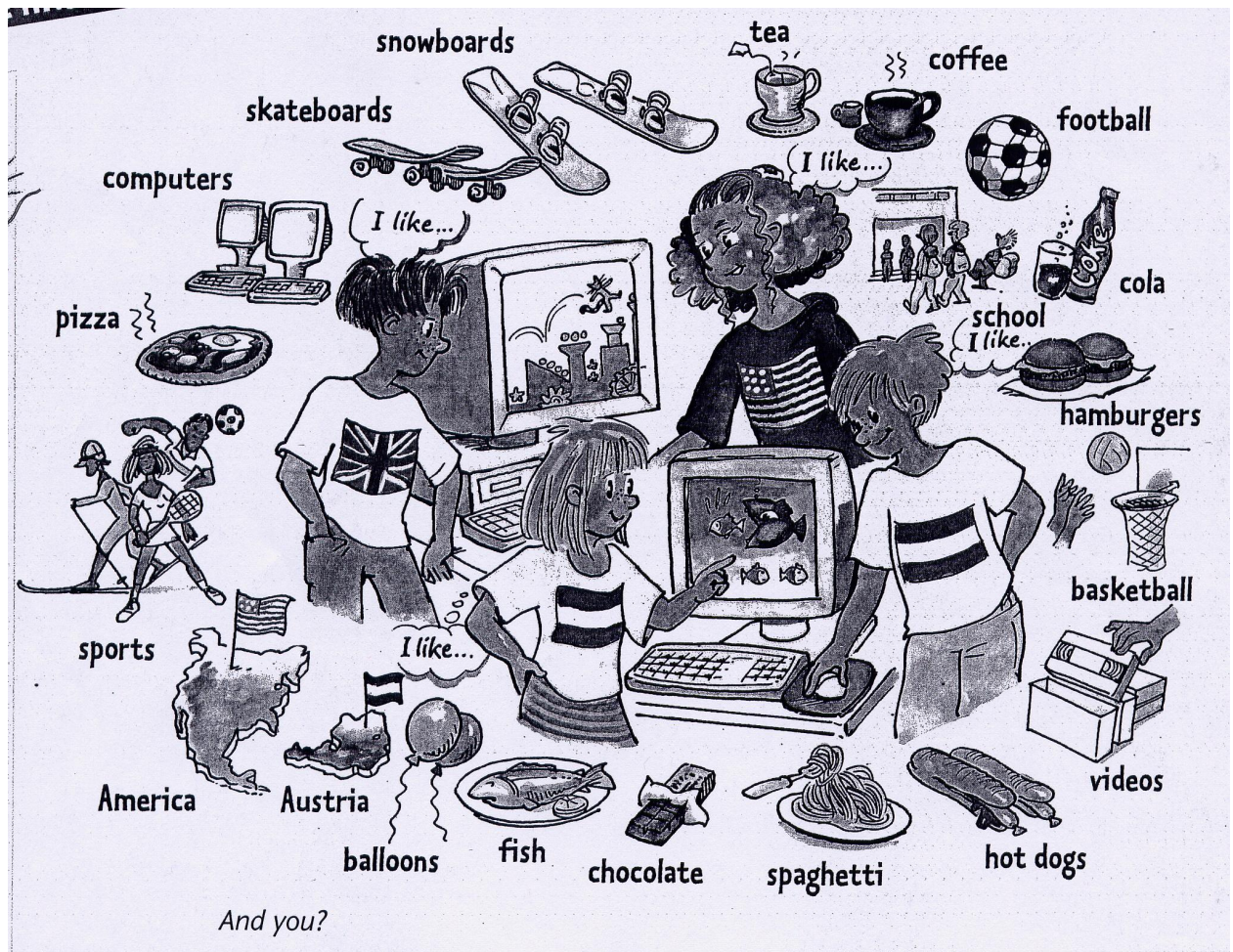
(show to come with your hand)

Just talk. What do you like?

Educational aims:

- *pupils see that they already know many English words*
- *pupils say what they like and they can ask somebody else what he/ she likes*

► I put the following picture on the overhead projector and tell them what I like.



▶ I write the question *What do you like?* on the board and ask a pupil.

Teacher: *Paul, what do you like?*

Paul: *I like...* (If the pupil needs other words I write them on the board).

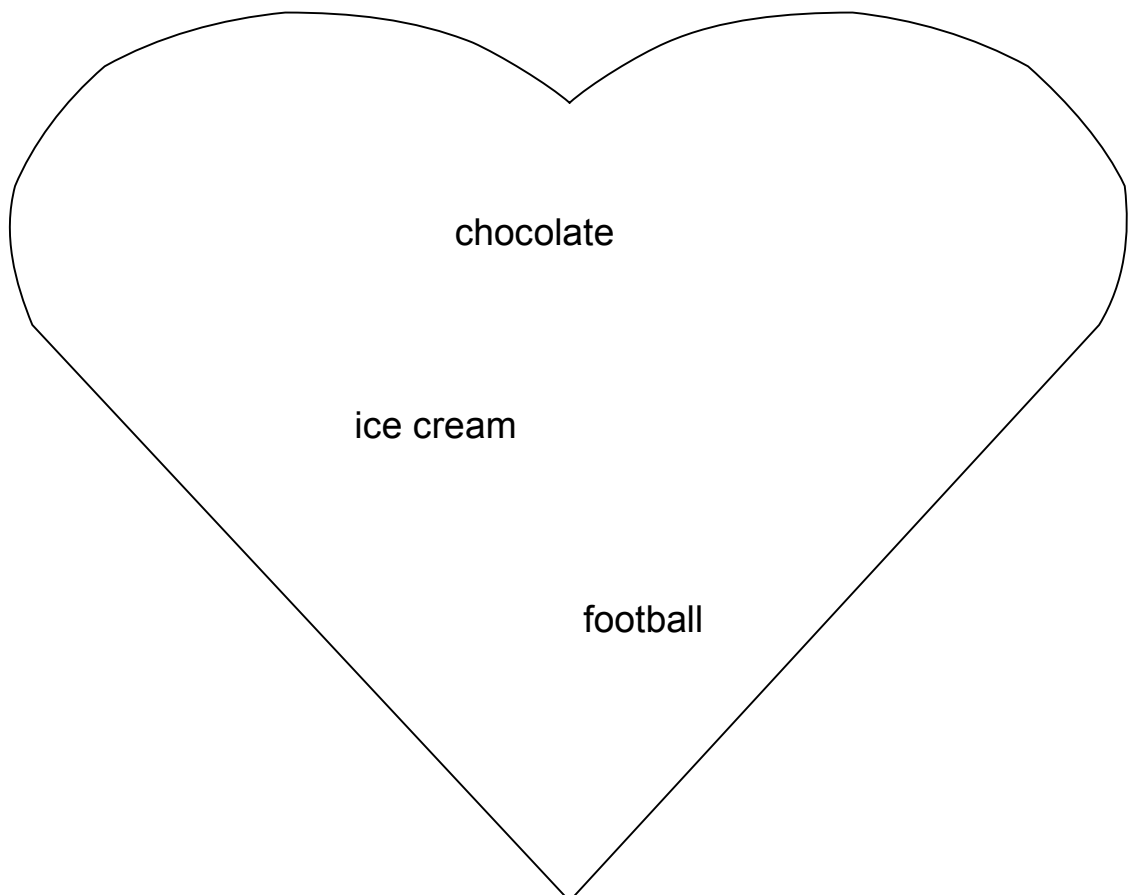
Teacher: *Now ask somebody else!*

Paul: *Claudia, what do you like?* Etc.

▶ Two or three children tell us what they like, then the pupils walk around and talk to at least four children. Every time they need more words they come and ask me.

▶ Now they draw a big heart into their notebook in which they draw and write what they like.

I like...



▶ The pupils bring along objects or pictures of things they like.

We sit in a circle.

Teacher: (shows the picture/ object) *I like flowers.*

Pupil 1: (has to repeat) *I like flowers and* (shows own object/ picture) *Spiderman.*

Pupil 2: *I like flowers, Spiderman and my dog.* Etc.

▶ We put all objects/ pictures in the middle of the circle. Every child tries to say as many sentences as possible. I start:

Teacher: *Maria likes horses, Peter likes mountain bikes, Andrea likes Volleyball,...*

On this occasion I mention the final *s* when we talk in the third person singular and the *s* we add, when we want to form the plural.

Then I throw a soft ball to a pupil, who has to go on.

Pupil 1: *Jonas likes football,...* Etc.

If a pupil knows which object/ picture belongs to a classmate but he/ she can't remember the name of the object, I ask: "Is it a hamburger? Is it a game boy? Is it a mountain bike?" (all words the child knows already) The child says "No", "No", "No". As soon as I say the unknown word the pupil knows it must be the correct word and he/ she says "Yes".

With this method the children listen for the new word to go with the object/ picture and at the same time we revise the "old" words which they know already.

How are you?

Educational aims:

- *pupils can express their feelings and they can ask somebody else how he/ she is*

► I introduce the phrase *How are you?* through the song:

Good morning

Good mor-ning, good mor-ning, good mor-ning to you. How
are you? J'm fine, thanks, and how are you?

(aus: Farrell. J.: Sing-a-ling, Sing-a-ling Verlags GmbH, Hamburg 1989)

I usually sing it twice: I start and the pupils answer; then they start and I answer.

► We practice this phrase :

Teacher: *Hello (Michael), how are you?*

Pupil1: *I'm fine , thanks.*

Hello, (Anne), how are you?

Pupil2: I'm fine. Etc.

► Role-play:

The children move around singing *Good morning, good morning, good morning to you*. Then they stop and ask a classmate:

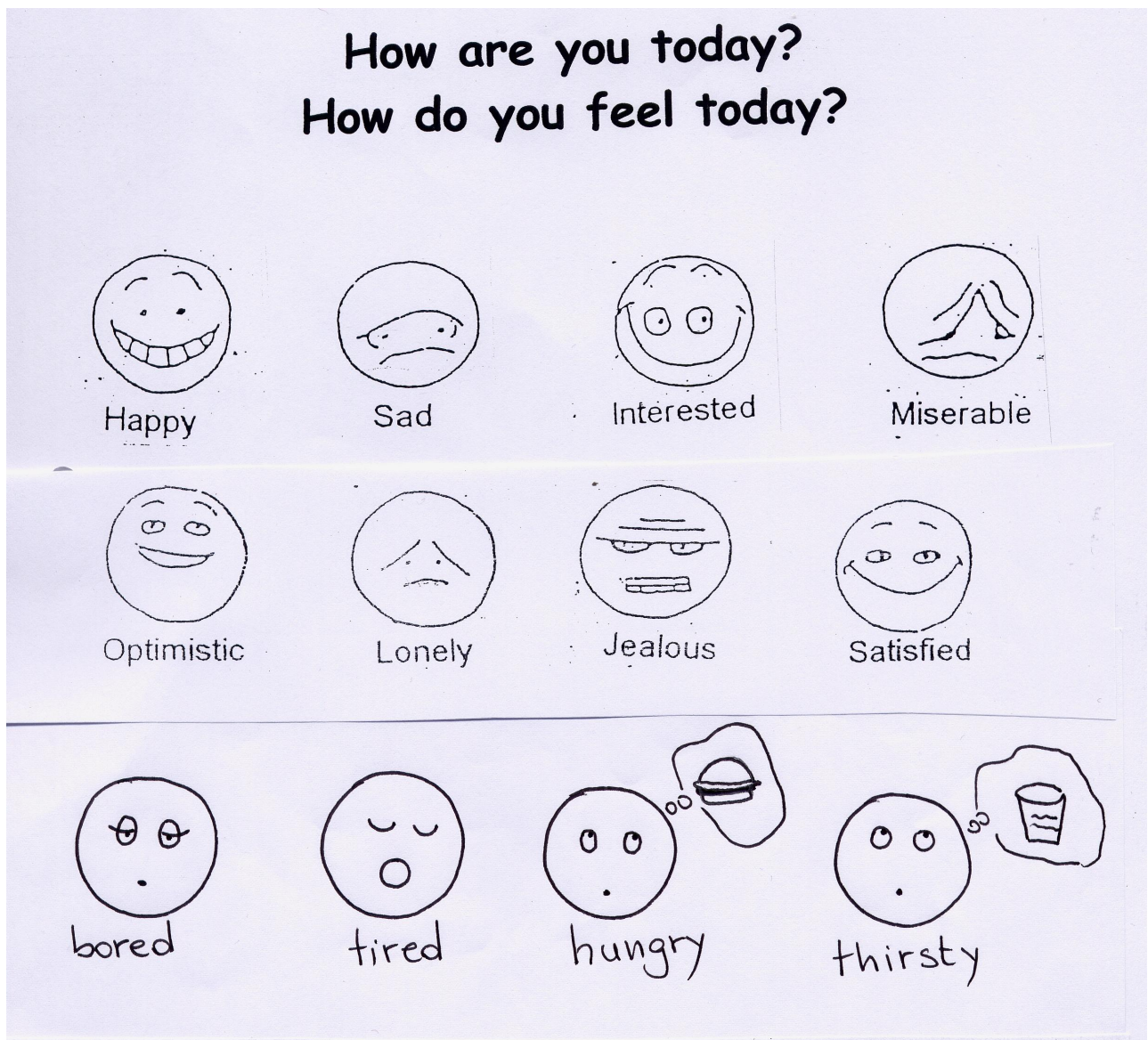
Pupil1: *How are you?*

Pupil2: *I'm fine, thanks. And how are you?*

Pupil1: *I'm fine, thanks.*

I also introduce the expressions *I'm not so fine* and *so-so*.

► Every lesson we add 4 more feelings using faces like this:



► We “practice” these feelings every time at the beginning of the lesson. We sing the *Good morning* song.

I start the song:

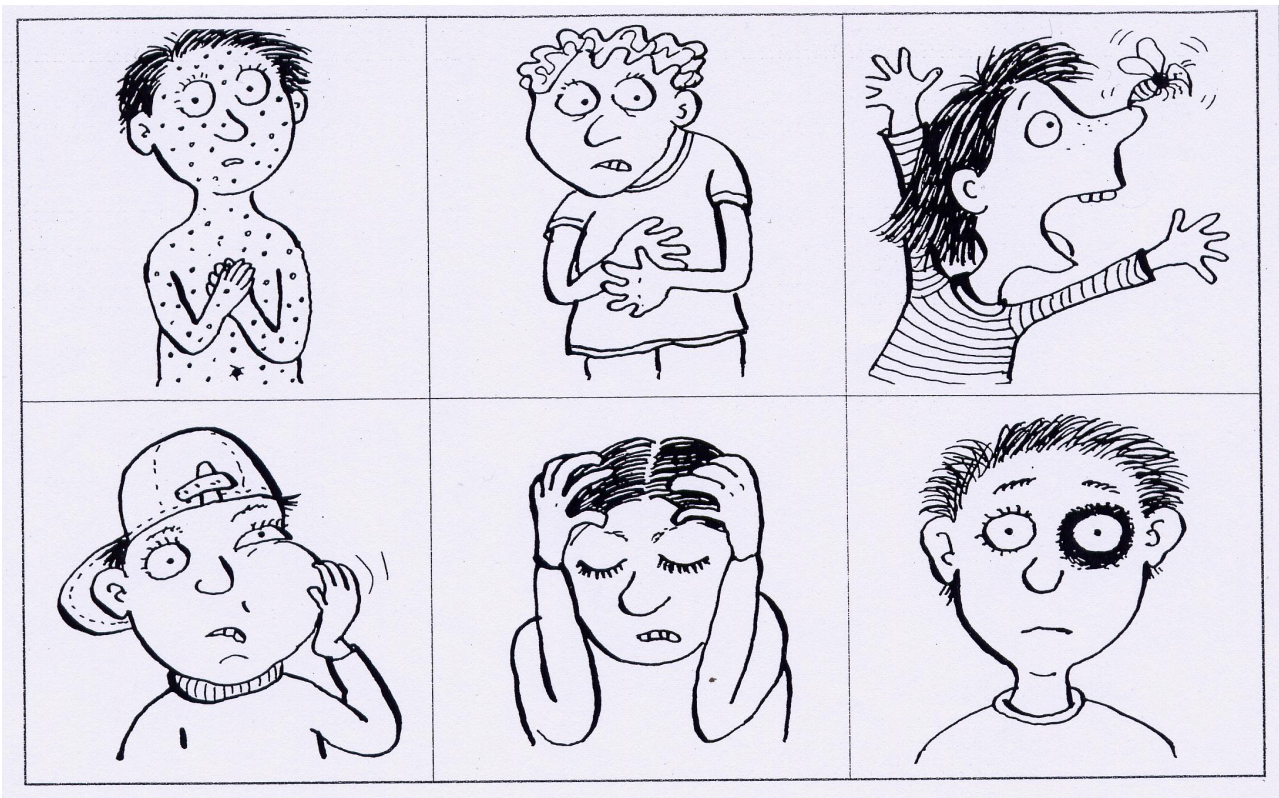
Teacher: *Good morning, good morning, good morning to you .How are you?*

Pupils: *I'm fine, thanks and how are you?*

Teacher: *I'm fine/ not so fine...*

Then the children start to sing the song, and when it's my turn to sing *...and how are you* I go to every single child, shake his/her hand say *good morning* and pose the question *How are you today?* That's when every child answers individually using the different expressions.

► More feelings



toothache	measles	headache
insect bite	black eye	stomach-ache

▶ We mime the different aches and say the word.

- I say the word and the children mime it.

- I mime and the children say the word.

- The children find the right word to the picture and write some sentences into their notebook:

I have got a headache...

▶ We play the *measles* game from Sally Kowanda:

We sit on our chairs in a circle, while one child has to stand in the middle. The one in the middle asks a classmate how she/ he is.

If the answer is *I'm fine, thanks* nothing happens.

If the answer is *I have got a toothache...* the left and the right neighbour of the child who has been asked have to change place, while the pupil in the middle has to try to be quicker than the others in order to sit down.

If the answer is *I've got measles* everybody has to change place, and the child in the middle tries to get a chair.



How old are you?

Educational aims:

- *pupils can count till 20*
- *pupils can say how old they are and they can ask somebody else how old he/ she is*

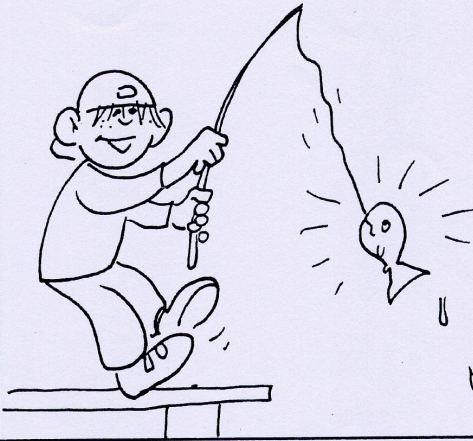
► I introduce the numbers from 1 to 10 through this number song

Lieder One, two, three,
four, five

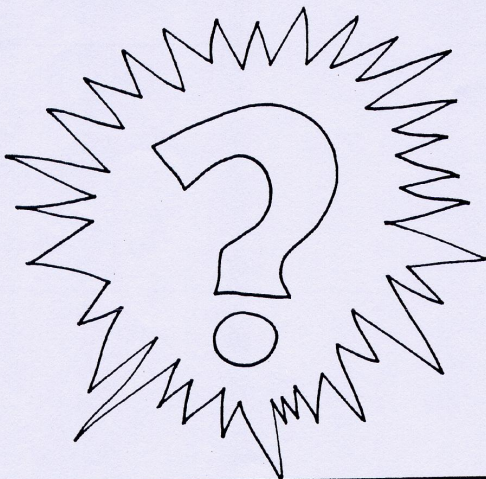
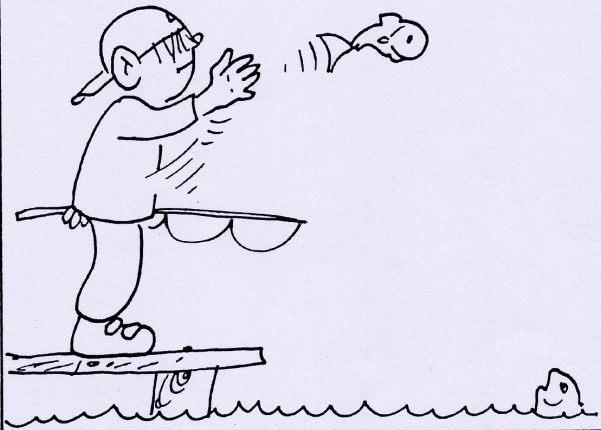
○ *Das Lied*

One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish a - live;
six, se - ven, eight, nine, ten, then I let him go a - gain.
Why did you let him go? Be - cause he bit my fin - ger so.
Which fin - ger did he bite? This lit - tle fin - ger on my right.

1 2 3 4 5



6 7 8 9 10



▶ I hand out the pictures because they help to understand, learn and remember the text of the song. I sing the song once.

▶ We sing and do the actions

One two, three four five,

Show the numbers with your fingers.

Once I caught a fish alive,

Show that you catch a fish with the fishing- rod.

Six, seven, eight, nine, ten,

Show the numbers with your fingers.

Then I let him go again.

Show, that you throw the fish back into the water.

Why did you let him go?

Make an astonished face.

Because he bit my finger so.

Make a sad face while you shake your hand.

Which finger did he bite?

Make an asking face.

This little finger on my right.

Show the little finger on your right.

Usually the children know already how to count till 10. So it's more a repetition than an introduction.

▶ I pay attention to the pronunciation of the number **3**: we exercise the correct pronunciation of the *th* the way Jim Wingate taught us (which is too difficult to describe in words). Then we go on and count till 20. The children have no difficulties figuring out the system (4+ *teen*, 6+ *teen*, ...). We underline the exceptions *thirteen*, and *fifteen*.

Number games

▶ *Is your number 10?*

A pupil takes a number card. The classmates have to guess the number. The pupil answers with *Yes it is./ No, it isn't*. As additional help it can also give the hint *more/ less* and underline it by putting the thumb up or

down: 👍 / 👎

Teacher: *Come here and chose a number.*

Class: *Is your number 6?*

Pupil1: *Yes, it is.*

Teacher: *Now it's your turn. Choose a number.*

Class: *Is your number 12?*

Pupil2: *No, it isn't.*

Teacher: *Help your classmates. Say "more" or "less".*

Pupil2: *It's more.* Etc.



▶ *Guess the number*

I show them very briefly a number card with the word written below. When I show the number I try to be very quick, so that they hardly can see it. In addition to that I show them the number upside down, I hold it and turn around myself as quick as I can, etc. This way a sort of competition comes up between them and me, they try to cheat, to guess the number before I show it, ... It's fun.

When I have only a few numbers left, I ask the children if they know which they are and usually they do know them.

▶ *Which number is missing?*

I stick all number cards on the board. The pupils have to close their eyes while I take away some numbers or swap them. Then they have to tell me, which numbers I took away or which numbers I swapped.



▶ *Who stole the cookies?*

We stand in a circle and everybody gets a number card. We start to snap the rhythm of the chant and we accompany it with different, exaggerated

movements (*point to the child, make a surprised face and point to yourself, do the movement of “no, no, no” with your finger,...*).

Class: *Who stole the cookies from the cookie jar?*

Teacher: *Number 6 ... stole the cookies from the cookie jar!*

Pupil “nr. 6”: *Who me?*

Class: *Yes you!! (loud)*

Pupil “nr. 6”: *Couldn't be!*

Class: *Then who?*

Pupil “nr. 6”: *Number 12 ... stole the cookies from the cookie jar!*

Class: *Ahaaa! Number 12 stole the cookies from the cookie jar!*

Pupil “nr. 12”: *Who me?*

Etc.

► Number quiz

Number quiz

Write down a number to all of these questions:

How old are you?



How many people are there in your family?



How many toes do you have?



How many letters are in your name?



▶ How old are you?

As soon as the pupils know the numbers, they learn to tell their age.

I bring along three pictures showing three children who have different ages. I affix them on the board.

Teacher: *This is John. He is a baby. He is only one year old. This is Tina. She is 9 years old. This is Peter. He is already twelve years old. And this is Anne (I show a little cuddly toy). She is... hmm..., I don't know how old she is. Anne, how old are you?*

Cuddly toy: *I'm 8 years old.*

Teacher: *Anne is 8 and how old are you?*

I ask some children the question *How old are you?* and I write it also on the board, as well as the answer *I'm ... (years old)*.

▶ Throw the dice

We sit in a circle. I write the question How old are you? and the answer I'm... (years old) on two coloured sheets of paper and put them in the middle of the circle. This time we throw the dice(s) before we tell our age. We change our voice according to the age.

Teacher: *Hello Michael. How old are you?*

Michael: (throws the dice) *I'm 3.*

Michael: *Hello Sabrina! How old are you? Etc.*

▶ Easy dialogue

In order to reenforce what we learned we write down a little dialogue. I mime, do the gestures, and when needed I form the words without using my voice. So I let the children speak and I write down what they tell me.

When I write down the dialogue I use different colours and I use the space in the following way:

Peter: Hello!

Anne: Hello!

Peter: What's your name?

Anne: My name is Anne, and what's your name?

Peter: My Name is Peter.

Anne: How are you, Peter?

Peter: I'm fine, and how are you?

Anne: Oh, I'm not so fine. I have got a headache.
How old are you?

Peter: I'm 10 years old, and how old are you?

Anne: I'm 9.

Peter: I have to go now. Good bye, Anne!

Anne: Bye, bye, Peter.

On this occasion the children recognize that there is a big difference between the pronunciation and the way we write a word. Therefore they have to pay attention when they copy the text into their notebook.

What's your telephone number?

Educational aims:

- *pupils can tell their telephone number and they can ask for somebody's else's telephone number.*

► We sit in a circle and I pass a "feel bag" with a mobile in it.

Teacher: *Look, I've brought along a surprise bag. Touch it and find out what's in it.*

Pupil: *Ein Handy.*

Teacher: *Is „Handy“ an English word?*

Pupils: *Yes.*

Teacher: *No, it isn't. In English we say mobile.*

Have you got a telephone at home?

Pupil1: *Yes.*

Teacher: *What's your telephone number?*

Pupil1: *My telephone number is...* (dials the number on the mobile while saying it aloud)

Pupil1: (gives the mobile to a classmate) *What's your telephone number?*

Pupil2: *My telephone number is...* Etc.

As usual I also write the question What's your telephone number? and the answer My telephone number is... on two coloured sheets of paper and put them on the floor so that everybody can take a look if needed.

► Role play

Two children get a mobile and a telephone number. Pupil 1 dials it aloud. Pupil 2 answers. I tell the children to “be” an important/ strange personality. This way the dialogue becomes more interesting.

Pupil1: *0471- 28...*

Pupil 2: *Hello*

Pupil1: *Hello. I'm Queen Elisabeth/ Mickey Mouse...*

Pupil2: *Good morning Queen Elisabeth. How are you today?*

Pupil1: *Oh, I have got a terrible toothache. And how are you Superman?*

Pupil2: *I have got measles.*

Pupil1: *What's the telephone number of Robin Hood, ...?*

Pupil2: (reads the telephone number) *0471- 97...*

Pupil1: Thank you and good bye.

Pupil2: Bye!

► Interview

The children look for a partner and interview him/ her.

Interview
name:
how is he/ she?:
age:
telephone number:

This time the children move around and everybody speaks at the same time. They write the information they get on the Interview sheet (everybody gets three of them). It doesn't matter if they make spelling mistakes. Again I want them to make up strange names, to invent different ages, ...



▶ Together we fill in the gaps in our British passport. Then we go on to the script.

▶ Total Physical Response

Script:

Let's fly to London!

Take your British passport.

Get into the plane.

Sit down.

Fasten your seatbelt.

Take off.

Fly.

(It's a nice flight./ There is a thunderstorm...)

Land.

Unfasten your seatbelt.

Stand up.

Get off the plane.

Welcome to London.

- Step 1:** I choose a volunteer. I say the script doing all the actions with the volunteer, who is silent.
- Step 2:** I repeat step one.
- Step 3:** I stand still, no gestures. I say the script. The volunteer does the actions.
- Step 4:** All stand. I stand still. I say the script. All pupils do the actions.
- Step 5:** I indicate all my learners to say the script. I do the

actions (they control me).

Step 6: In pairs, A says the script, B does the actions. Then B says the script and A does the actions.

Step 7: I show the script on the board and point to each sentence in turn. They say the script.

Step 8: I point to the sentences and words randomly and the pupils say the sentences and words.

Step 9: Each writes the script into the notebook.

Occasionally we have also to “go through the passport control”. An “officer” sits on a desk and stamps the passports saying “*Welcome to London!*”

I use this activity to get ready for the English lesson as well as to finish it.

So when we fly back the script changes into:

Let's fly back to South Tyrol. ... Welcome back to South Tyrol.



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