

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-64990-2 - Teaching Adult Second Language Learners

Heather McKay and Abigail Tom

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Teaching adult  
second language learners

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-64990-2 - Teaching Adult Second Language Learners  
Heather McKay and Abigail Tom  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOKS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS

This is a series of practical guides for teachers of English and other languages. Illustrative examples are usually drawn from the field of English as a foreign or second language, but the ideas and techniques described can equally well be used in the teaching of any language.

*In this series:*

**Drama Techniques in Language Learning** – A resource book of communication activities for language teachers *by Alan Maley and Alan Duff*

**Games for Language Learning** *by Andrew Wright, David Betteridge and Michael Buckby*

**Discussions That Work** – Task-centred fluency practice *by Penny Ur*

**Once Upon a Time** – Using stories in the language classroom *by John Morgan and Mario Rinvolucri*

**Teaching Listening Comprehension** *by Penny Ur*

**Keep Talking** – Communicative fluency activities for language teaching *by Friederike Klippel*

**Working with Words** – A guide to teaching and learning vocabulary *by Ruth Gairns and Stuart Redman*

**Learner English** – A teacher's guide to interference and other problems *edited by Michael Swan and Bernard Smith*

**Testing Spoken Language** – A handbook of oral testing techniques *by Nic Underhill*

**Literature in the Language Classroom** – A resource book of ideas and activities *by Joanne Collie and Stephen Slater*

**Dictation** – New methods, new possibilities *by Paul Davis and Mario Rinvolucri*

**Grammar Practice Activities** – A practical guide for teachers *by Penny Ur*

**Testing for Language Teachers** *by Arthur Hughes*

**Pictures for Language Learning** *by Andrew Wright*

**Five-Minute Activities** – A resource book of short activities *by Penny Ur and Andrew Wright*

**The Standby Book** – Activities for the language classroom *edited by Seth Lindstromberg*

**Lessons from Nothing** – Activities for language teaching with limited time and resources *by Bruce Marsland*

**Beginning to Write** – Writing Activities for Elementary and Intermediate Learners *by Arthur Brookes and Peter Gundy*

**Ways of Doing** – Students Explore Their Everyday and Classroom Processes *by Paul Davis, Barbara Garside, and Mario Rinvolucri*

**Using Newspapers in the Classroom** *by Paul Sanderson*

**Teaching Adult Second Language Learners** *by Heather McKay and Abigail Tom*

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-64990-2 - Teaching Adult Second Language Learners  
Heather McKay and Abigail Tom  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

# Teaching Adult Second Language Learners

*Heather McKay*

*Abigail Tom*



Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-64990-2 - Teaching Adult Second Language Learners  
 Heather McKay and Abigail Tom  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, United Kingdom [www.cup.ac.uk](http://www.cup.ac.uk)  
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA [www.cup.org](http://www.cup.org)  
 10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia  
 Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain

© Cambridge University Press 1999

First published 1999

Printed in the United States of America.

*Typeface* Sabon 10½/12pt.

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

McKay, Heather, 1950–  
 Teaching adult second language learners / Heather McKay,  
 Abigail H. Tom.  
 p. cm – (Cambridge handbooks for language teachers)  
 ISBN 0-521-64990-0 (pbk.)  
 1. Language and languages – Study and teaching. 2. Second language  
 acquisition. 3. Adult education. I. Tom, Abigail, 1941– II. Title.  
 III. Series.  
 P53 .M33 1999  
 418'.0071'5–dc21

99-36775  
 CIP

ISBN 0 521 649900 paperback

It is normally necessary for written permission for copying to be obtained *in advance* from a publisher. The boxes in this book are designed to be copied and distributed in class. The normal requirements are waived here and it is not necessary to write to Cambridge University Press for permission for an individual teacher to make copies for use within his or her own classroom. Only those pages which carry the wording '© Cambridge University Press' may be copied.

## Contents

### Introduction 1

Who will use this book?	1
Who is the adult second language learner?	1
What do adult learners bring to a class?	2
How can instructors obtain information about their students?	5
What assumptions about language learning underlie this book?	15
How do you plan a course?	17
What makes a balanced lesson?	18
How can a teacher work with a multilevel class?	20
How do you choose teaching materials?	22
How is the rest of this book organized?	23

### Building community in the classroom 24

Arranging the classroom	24
Establishing classroom routines	25
Pair and group work	26
Getting acquainted	29

### THEME-BASED UNITS 33

#### Personal identification 35

Treasured object	35
Personal time lines	36
Sentence starters	37
Tell me about you	38
Personal information form	39
Jigsaw questionnaire	43
Interviews	45
Find your identical twin	46
What roles do I play?	49
Cultural questionnaire	50
Emergency phone calls	53

## Contents

### Family 55

Family dictation	55
Family strips	58
Family tree	62
Stand-up family tree	62
Photographs	63
Family numbers	64
Family riddles	65
What is a family?	66
Family member pie graphs	68
A family problem	70

### Community 73

Fuzzy photos	73
Photo questions	74
Do-it-yourself matching	75
Hopes and fears	77
Community map	78
Favorite places	79
Do-it-yourself information gap	81
What do you look for in a neighborhood?	83
Places and labels	85
Guide	86
Community photos	88

### Food 90

Refrigerator dictation	90
Who, what, and when	92
Shopping	94
Supermarkets	95
Food search	98
Shopping list	99
Food bingo	101
Food proverbs	104
Recipe dictation	106
Cookbook	108
Restaurant questionnaire	108
Yellow Pages	110

### Clothing 112

Clothing descriptions	112
Something special	113

*Contents*

Mail-order catalog matching	113
Real stuff	115
Shopping information gap	116
A store	118
Laundry strips	122
Marketplace	124
Clothing survey	126
What's my size?	128
<b>Housing</b>	<b>132</b>
Addresses	132
Where is it?	133
Draw a house	134
Room dictation	135
Describe and draw	137
Which house?	137
Dream house	138
Residential lease	139
Yard sale	143
Housing survey	146
Apartment partners	147
Whose problem is it?	152
Repair split dialogue	153
<b>Health</b>	<b>156</b>
Body drawing	156
Getting in shape	157
Body part bingo	160
Three-part appointment gap	163
Medicine directions	165
First aid	167
Heimlich maneuver	170
Listen and say	172
Rotating brainstorm	174
Medical form	175
Community options	178
<b>Work</b>	<b>179</b>
What can you do?	179
Salary dictation	180
What's my job?	182
How do they rank?	183

## *Contents*

Stress ratings	184
Job advertisements	185
How to get a job	188
Who says what?	189
Schedule information gap	192
Interview dos and don'ts	195
Mistakes do happen	198
Calling in	200
Point of view	202
Work week	203
Mystery monologue	206
<b>Money</b>	<b>209</b>
Money associations	209
Money is . . .	210
How much money does she have?	211
Checks	213
Neither a borrower nor a lender be	215
Proverbs	217
Family money survey	219
Where does the money go?	220
A money store	221
Lost and found	222
Write your own money survey	224
Bank accounts	226
Pros and cons	228
Bibliography	231
Indexes	233

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-64990-2 - Teaching Adult Second Language Learners  
Heather McKay and Abigail Tom  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

With thanks to our colleagues and students who have taught us so much.

With thanks also to Penny Ur for her determination to make this book the best that it could be. Any remaining shortcomings are of course our own.