

Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL)

An Introduction

Welcome to the *Global English* Teaching English to Young Learners course. This course assumes an initial level of knowledge of the principles of English Language Teaching and is designed to give new or practising TEFL teachers some help with the following areas:



1. Some insights into the world of teaching English to Young Learners
2. A look at how we develop the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening effectively with Young Learners
3. An overview of some of the main methodologies for teaching English in three key YL areas: Kindergarten, Primary and Teenagers
4. Practical help for Classroom Management
5. A look at maximising your use of free and subscription internet resources
6. At the other end of the scale, how to teach with minimal resources

Although this Young Learners module is made up of several components under separate headings, it is important to remember that these interact with each other. We have broken them down to make the ideas behind teaching this fascinating area easier to understand.



While the demand for teaching English to Young Learners lessons is increasing world-wide, of course it means different things to different people. For example, you wouldn't walk into a classroom of teenagers and expect to use the same material you have just finished using with your primary level learners. So we will look at a range of levels and ages across the Young Learner sections of this course. Our aim here is to introduce you to 'Young Learner English' as a subject and to provide you with the confidence to teach, and a framework for your teaching to a variety of groups and abilities.

The Demand for TEYL

Around the world there is an increasing demand for English to be taught to youngsters. Undoubtedly this has something to do with the Globalisation of English as a means of international communication. Firstly television and now the internet are feeding this demand.

According to reports from the British Council, there seems to be an increase in demand for YL courses all around the world (see the British Council Worldwide Survey of primary ELT - http://www.britishcouncil.org/worldwide_survey_of_primary_elt.pdf). There appears to be a feeling in the industry that the earlier young learners start to study English as a Second Language, the more effectively they will learn the language. Whether this is true has yet to be effectively proven, but we are seeing the age at which English is introduced into mainstream schooling reduced and the advent of pre-school classes.

This is supported by one of the largest organisations in EFL teaching, International House. For example, BKC-IH Moscow, the largest School of Foreign Languages in Russia and the CIS, states on its website that:

'There are many schools which teach all subjects in English beginning with the first class. They are either embassy related schools or independent ones but both accept Russian students. There are also English clubs for kids and camp programmes throughout the country. Parents send their children abroad to Great Britain, the US or other English speaking countries to study English as well.

But most of them prefer sending their children to extra curricular language academies where teachers are qualified native English speakers. What is more these English schools require EFL teachers of YL not just for the academic year or during the summer but all year round. Teachers, either experienced or newly qualified, who can teach young learners, are welcome to Moscow all year round.

BKC-IH Moscow is a school of foreign languages with approximately 6000 students per year. There are numerous YL programmes which are increasing from year to year. According to statistics from March 2005 55 % of the school's students are younger than 16 years old.'

(Source: <http://www.bkc.ru/eng/teaching/yl1.html>)

Parents are increasingly seeing the importance of English as a Second Language and are being tempted to push their children into Private English classes earlier, hence the rise in demand for Kindergarten English teachers in countries such as China and Korea. Upon leaving school, work prospects are diminished if second language skills are absent, hence the pressure on teenagers to pass exams to show employers the valuable bit of paper which says they have a command of a second language, most commonly English.

The result of all this is that quite often English teachers find themselves thrown in at the deep end, teaching Young Learners with little specific knowledge of who they are teaching, what materials they should use and how best to manage them and their classroom.

This course aims to answer these questions and to help you get started with Young Learners.