

Basic Suggestions

First day suggestions:

- **The very first thing you do should be to EXCHANGE PHONE NUMBERS!!!!**
- Your student will be even more nervous than you, so start out by just chatting and try to gauge their level of Spanish and English.
- If they are shy, ask them about where they grew up. (Great conversation starter!) Tell them about yourself, too.
- Ask why they are there and what they would like to get out of PALMA; make broad goals.
- Ask what they want you to teach them.
- Again, EXCHANGE PHONE NUMBERS!!

Some general structural suggestions:

- Create a “package” to teach in one session. You can have one verb in the present tense and some vocabulary that goes with that verb. (Ex: If you teach “to go,” make a short vocabulary list of places you can “go” to.)
- Encourage your student to bring a notebook everyday in which they write down their lessons in both English and Spanish. (Some students have very basic knowledge of even Spanish grammar, so this is often helpful.) You can save a page for a continuous list of new vocabulary that pops up outside of lessons.
- After writing down the lesson, practice the new verb and vocabulary by acting out situations in which you would use those words, or simply ask each other questions. (Ex: Q: What do I have? A: I have a pencil.) (In order to do this, you must first teach how to form questions—see Question Section.)
- Start with the present tense. Make clear distinctions between the tenses as you are teaching them. In general, do not teach more than one tense in one week. (Also, after you teach the past tense, ask them how they would say it for “today” to make sure they have not confused the tenses.)
- Discourage mindless memorization of phrases—encourage them to learn how to form their own sentences.
- Give homework that allows them to practice what they did during PALMA and make sure to check it at the beginning of the next tutoring session.
- Don’t teach conjunctions until they understand how to use the whole words. (Ex: I do v. I don’t)

Grammar Guidelines for Adults (minus the fancy grammar words)

I've compiled some general grammar guidelines that I have discovered while teaching ESL. Since they are my personal observations, there may be exceptions to these guidelines (as with any grammar rule), but I find them to be useful in introducing concepts in English that are not present in Spanish.

"To Do"

There are three places you see this word in the English language; it's important that your student distinguish between these usages.

1. "Hacer"

Ex: I do many things every day. (Hago muchas cosas todos los dias.)

2. Questions ***"do" cannot be translated to Spanish

Ex: Do you like chocolate cake? (Te gusta el pastel chocolate?)

3. Negative statements***"do" cannot be translated to Spanish

Ex: I do not like chocolate cake. (No me gusta el pastel chocolate.)

Note: "Do" will be present in almost all questions. Sometimes there is no "do" if there's a question word like *who, what, when, where, why, how*, etc.

These rules are pretty much the same for the past tense, "did."

Verb Conjugations

If you learned Spanish in school, most likely they taught you five or six conjugations for each verb. In English, for regular verbs, they are generally only two in the *present tense*. Let's take "to drive."

I/You/They/We---drive

He/She/It---drives

In the *past tense*, they is generally only one:

I/You/They/We/He/She/It: drove

***Write down all of the conjugations in Spanish and show how all of those mean the same thing in English.

Teach irregular verbs separately, like "to be," which has more conjugations in the present tense.

Exceptions and Crazy Verbs

Reflexive Verbs

This is confusing for many students to translate to English. I tell them to put “me, her, him, us, them”, etc, after the verb.

Ex: Ella me hace feliz. It makes *me* happy. (The method is to cross out the “me” in Spanish, translate it and put “me” after the verb in English.)

You can ask them to memorize “me gusta” as “I like”, “te gusta” as “you like,” etc, and not translate it literally in order to simplify things. Make sure they know this is an exception to how you normally translate things.

I am going...

This is also confusing since it does not translate to “Estoy yendo.” Another instance in which memorizing “voy” as “I am going,” “vas” as “you are going,” etc, will be simple, as long as you tell them it is an exception.

Past Preterite/Past Imperfect

Spanish preterite will always translate to English past tense. (Ex: *Yo fui* to *I went*)

Spanish imperfect can translate in two different ways.

Habitual action: *Iba a la escuela todos los días* would be *I **went** to school every day.*

Short term: *Iba al trabajo, cuando un gato cruzó la calle* becomes *I **was going** to work, when a cat crossed the road.*