How to Use Lexicarry

Teacher’s Guide
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At Pro Lingua
our objective is to foster an approach
to learning and teaching that we call
interplay, the interaction of language
learners and teachers with their materials,
with the language and culture,
and with each other in active, creative
and productive play.

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General Introduction
for Teachers

Lexicarry is a book of pedagogical illustrations for building vocabulary. The illustrated vocabulary items are grouped into seven contexts: Functions, Sequences, Related Actions, Topics, Places, and Proverbs and Sayings. These contexts provide connections that students can use to acquire and retain vocabulary. The numbers on the illustrations correspond to a word list in the back of the book. There is also an index of vocabulary items that allows learners to find the pictures that illustrate the words, as in a picture dictionary. This alphabetical index is available in English for free at www.Lexicarry.com.

Providing students with opportunities to create connections with words is the pedagogical principle of Lexicarry. For this reason, there are no words on the pages of pictures. When students are encouraged to become actively involved in finding the words to describe the pictures and then using these words, they create their own connections between pictures and words.

Students create connections when they study a picture and then guess what it is, use their imaginations to say something fanciful about it, make a joke about it, ask another student questions about it, try to describe it using other words they know, look it up in the index or in their dictionaries, relate it to their personal experiences, or even when they ask the teacher about it. Students create connections when they write words next to the pictures in the book or in a separate language learning notebook. Students also create connections when they show the pictures to fluent speakers outside the classroom and engage them in conversations about what they see. These meaningful connections can give students a flying start toward mastery of vocabulary.

Teachers can try the following teaching suggestions for each of the seven contexts.
How to Use the Functions Section

This context consists of brief, everyday conversational exchanges or speech acts that revolve around specific communicative functions. These are almost always set within more involved communicative situations or scenarios.

Identifying the Language

1. Have students identify the language for each of the numbered balloons, either working alone with a sheet of paper, in pairs or small groups, or as a class. If students have worked alone, have them compare and share their answers in pairs or small groups. Write the language on the blackboard or on a sheet of butcher paper as students report their findings. Encourage students to volunteer a variety of alternative expressions.

2. Ask students to study each of the dialogues or exchanges to determine whether or not the language in them accurately reflects the situation portrayed in the drawings. Provide corrections if the students are not able to do so.

3. Have students give names to the people in the drawings. Students can then develop mini-biographies of the people, expanding them into characters.

Practice

1. Choose one set of exchanges and have students practice saying it. Then have them act it out in pairs or before the class.

2. Have students identify appropriate gestures, facial expressions or other nonverbal language appropriate to the exchange. Students act out the exchange again, incorporating these elements.
3. For intermediate and advanced students, have them practice other possible exchanges in the same manner.

4. Have students use reported speech to recount the exchange.

5. Have students use the exchange as the central feature of a short story that they write or tell to the others. They can set the story in a particular time period, using the appropriate tenses (past, present, future, conditional, etc.).

Follow-up Activities: Sociolinguistic/Cultural Exploration

Once the basic exchanges have been mastered, students can explore cultural implications and features of the exchanges.

1. Have students draw up a list of various persons who could be involved in the exchange. For each set of persons, have students generate an appropriate exchange. Some possible persons and their roles:

- parent/child
- husband/wife
- strangers
- enemies
- colleagues
- employee/boss
- rich person/poor person
- lovers
- young person/old person
- salesperson/customer

2. Identify appropriate nonverbal language for each exchange, and have the students practice and act them out. Use props and costumes.

3. Have students suggest underlying motives for the exchanges between specific persons. Possible motives include:

- impatience–one person wants to end the exchange
- affection–one person likes the other
- suspicion–one person doesn’t trust the other
- condescension–one person looks down on the other
- fear–one person is afraid of the other
- respect–one person holds the other in high regard
- deceit–one person tries to trick or lie to the other
- boredom–one person is not interested in the other

Once these motives have been assigned to the persons, have students identify the appropriate tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions and other body language to convey these underlying messages through the basic exchange. Students then incorporate these in acting out the exchange.
4. Introduce other contextual variables that could affect the exchange:
   - time of day or night
   - place
   - season of the year
   - personalities of the persons
   - ethnic backgrounds of the persons
   - social circumstances (during a meal, at a party, etc.)

   Have students again identify the appropriate verbal and non-verbal language and act out the exchanges.

5. Engage students in a discussion of the cultural aspects of the exchanges. Focus questions can include:
   - What observations can you make about the culture in this exchange?
   - What cultural values or beliefs might explain the language or the behaviors in this exchange?
   - How are such exchanges carried out in your culture?
   - Describe the similarities and differences.
   - What are possible explanations for these similarities or differences?

Research
1. Have students observe exchanges in films, videos, television programs, or in the culture itself and record the language and gestures that are used. When they report their findings in class, have students describe in detail the physical setting, the social situation, and the identities of the participants.

2. Ask students to show the illustrations to a native speaker and interview them using the questions above as a guide.
How to Use the Sequences Section

This context consists of a series of actions that together constitute a logical chain of events.

Identifying the Language
Have students identify the actions in each of the panels. The present progressive tense (or its equivalent) is particularly useful for this.

Practice
1. Have students work in pairs to ask and answer questions about the actions in each of the panels of the sequence.
   - What is the person doing in number two?
   - Is the person falling in number two?

2. Have students generate a list of synonyms of equivalent expressions for the actions in each panel. Put the words on the blackboard, and have students continue asking and answering questions using the new words.

3. To challenge students, have them vary the tenses to describe the sequence of actions. For example:
   - He fell.
   - He will fall.
   - He has just fallen.
   - He is going to fall.
4. Introduce additional linguistic elements through sentence patterns, and have students describe the sequences using the appropriate language.

   If he trips, then he’ll fall.
   Whenever he falls, he gets up.
   He fell down because he didn’t see the stone in the path.
   By eight o’clock tomorrow, he will have fallen down.
   Before he fell, he tripped on a stone.
   He had better be careful, otherwise he’ll trip and fall.
   He must have been preoccupied, because he tripped.

5. To challenge students’ descriptive powers, have them describe the sequence of events starting from the second, third, or fourth panel. For example:

   • He fell down after he tripped on a stone. Then he got up.
   • He got up slowly. He had been walking along and didn’t see a stone in the path. He tripped on it and fell down.

6. Have students create new “beginnings” and “endings” to the sequences. That is, they add new panels. For example:

   Beginnings: He is strolling down the street.
   He is thinking about his problems as he walks.
   He is hurrying to catch the bus.
   His friend is pushing him from behind.

   Endings: He is dusting himself off.
   He is rubbing his knee.
   He is limping.
   He is complaining to his friend.

7. Have students add other panels that occur between panels in the sequence. For example:

   He’s waving his arms in the air.
   He’s rolling on the ground.
   He’s shouting for help.

8. Ask students to write brief stories, using the sequence as the central theme. Afterwards, have them share their stories with the rest of the class. As a variation, have students work in small groups to combine their individual stories into one.

9. After students have learned a number of sequences, give 3 to 5 sequences to pairs of students and have them put all the sequences together into a story.
Follow-up Activities

1. Have individual students choose a sequence at random to mime for the others, who then call out each action. As a variation, have students compete in teams.

2. Have students add dialogue or conversations to their description of sequences.

3. Have students put the sequence into other contexts and describe the actions using the vocabulary of this new setting.

Research

1. Have students observe a social scene (on film, video, or directly in the culture) and record the sequences of actions (routines or scenarios) that they see. Following their reports in class, ask them to explain the cultural significance of these sequences.
How to Use the Related Actions Section

This context includes actions that are variations of a single action.

Identifying the Language

Have students identify the actions for each panel. Encourage them to circumlocute to describe an action for which they don’t know the word. For example:

In number 4, the man is walking with a cane. He is walking as if he hurt his leg. He has difficulty lifting his left leg. One leg is stiff, and he has trouble bending it.

Practice

1. Have students group the actions into categories of their own making. They then share their lists in pairs or small groups, explaining the reasons for their system of categorization.

2. Ask students to create a situation that describes each action. For example:

   You crawl when you are a little baby.
   Soldiers crawl when the enemy shoots at them.
   To get something underneath a bush, you need to crawl.
3. Give all the students the same set of 3 to 5 actions and ask them to put them together in a series of related statements. For example:

   The man ran to the hospital with a bottle of champagne and a bouquet of flowers. He paced the floor, waiting for news of the birth. He drank too much champagne in celebration and staggered home.

   While walking through the park, a woman hit her head on a tree branch, and staggered into a busy street. She fell and crawled to a park bench where a man was sitting. The man ran to call an ambulance. Her friend paced back and forth in the waiting room, expecting the worst.

4. Pick two actions at random and ask students to explain how they are similar and different. Encourage them to use situations as part of their explanations.

5. Ask students to identify adverbs to accompany the actions in sentences they create. Have students ask and answer questions to identify the manner of the action and to explain why. For example:

   How is the man pacing in number 8?
   – He’s pacing nervously.
   Why is he pacing nervously?
   – He’s pacing nervously because he is worried about his wife’s health.

6. Have students add imaginary comparisons to their descriptions of actions. For example:

   – He’s limping like a wounded animal.
   – He’s jumping over the fence as if he were a deer.
   – He tiptoed across the room like a guilty child.

Follow-up Activities

1. After students have learned a series of related actions, choose 7 to 10 different ones and ask students to put them together in brief stories.

2. Have students choose 5 to 7 actions from different related actions contexts and compose a sequence that they mime before the class. Student observers write down their versions of the mimed sequence, compare them with a neighbor, and then check their answers with the student mime.
Research

1. Have students observe a social scene (portrayed in a film, video, or television program, or directly in the culture) and note related actions, bring their results to class to share through oral descriptions, miming the actions, or through their own drawings. Following these presentations, ask students to offer cultural explanations for these actions.

2. Have students show the page of related actions to native speakers, and record their descriptions of examples for each of the actions. Have students encourage native speakers to tell personal stories about one or more of the related actions. Students report the results of their research in class.
How to Use the Operations Section

This context consists of a ordered sequences of actions, a set of procedures, which result in a predictable outcome. These procedures usually involve tools, objects, or machines and follow a strict set of steps.

Identifying the Language

Have students identify the language for each step, using the imperative form.

Practice

1. Have students work in pairs, one giving the command for each step of the operation and the other acting out or miming it. For example:

   – Unscrew the burned out light bulb.
   – Throw it in the trash.
   – Put in the new light bulb.

2. Have students vary the command-mime exercise, including negative commands and other expressions. Some possibilities:

   – Don’t throw the light bulb away yet.
   – Never unscrew the light bulb with the switch on.
   – Be careful not to break the old light bulb.
   – It’s always a good idea to test the new bulb.
3. Ask students to describe all the steps of the operation using sequence connectors. For example:

   First, _________________.  Second, _________________.  
   Then, _________________.  After that, _________________. 
   Next, _________________.  Finally, _________________.

   Vary this activity by having students ask questions that will elicit these expressions. For example:

   What do you do first?  What do you do after that?

4. Have students use modal auxiliaries (or their equivalents) to describe the steps of the operation. For example:

   You must not throw the new light bulb in the trash.
   You have to turn on the light switch to test the new bulb.
   You could throw the old bulb in the trash afterwards.
   You had better turn off the switch beforehand.
   You ought to test the new bulb after you put it in.

5. Ask students to speculate on possible “breakdowns” that could occur if the steps of the operation are not properly followed, using “What if?” questions. For example:

   – What if you don’t test the light bulb?
     You won’t know if it works.
   – What if you didn’t unscrew the burned out light bulb?
     You wouldn’t be able to put in a new one.

6. To challenge students, have them write a set of technical instructions for the steps of the operation, using expressions they might find in a technical manual. Examples:

   Remove the defective light bulb by turning it counterclockwise.
   Discard the defective bulb by placing it in the trash receptacle.
   Insert a new light bulb into the light socket.

**Follow-up Activities**

1. Have the students make up stories with the operation as a central event. To focus their work, provide limitations, such as:

   time: yesterday
   unreal conditions: if John had known
   characters: John and Mary (husband and wife)
   plot: they heard a suspicious noise in the basement
2. Choose 3 to 5 elements from other contexts and have students work in pairs to include them in a description of the operation. For example:

- function: saying “I don’t know”
- topics: animals
- sequences: falling
- operation: changing a light bulb
- related actions: seeing

Students share their descriptions with the class.

Research

1. Have students observe a social scene and list the artifacts, objects, tools, or machines that are used, and to identify the procedures people follow to operate or use them. Students report the results by bringing in a photograph or drawing of the item and describing the steps in its operation.

2. Have students visit native speakers to interview them about the objects, tools, or machines that they use as part of their profession or their daily lives. Students list the specific steps in the operations as described by their informants.
How to Use the Topics and Places

Sections

Topics are collections of items and actions that relate to a particular theme, purpose, or category.
Places contain items that are associated with a particular location. In the place picture, there is a mysterious “quirk” that can provoke students’ speculation and discussion.

**Identifying the Language**

1. Have students identify each of the numbered items, either working alone with a sheet of paper, in pairs or small groups, or as a class. If students have worked alone, have them compare their answers with others.

2. Have students identify other vocabulary items that are not numbered. When they do, write (or have a student write) the words on the blackboard. Students can also write the words on a separate sheet of paper or in their books.
3. To expand students’ range of vocabulary identification, put the names of categories in columns on the blackboard, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. have students identify additional vocabulary items in the picture that fit these categories, and write them down as they say them. If students don’t know these terms, put sample words for each category at the top of each column instead.

Practice
1. With the vocabulary items on the blackboard, have students use them in sentences that describe the picture. As a variation, have students make sentences of certain types: statements, questions, negative statements. A further variation is to provide a particular sentence pattern, such as:

   Whenever ____________, ________________.
   Every day, ________________________
   If ______________, then ________________
   I’m not sure, but I think that ________________

2. Draw up a list of questions that allow students to talk about the pictures. After practicing saying the questions, have the students work in pairs to ask and answer these questions. Sample questions:

   What color is _________?
   What is ________ used for?
   Where is ______________?
   What is ________ like?
   What is the difference between_______ and ___________?
   What is happening in picture number ___________?

3. Have students use vocabulary items and sentence patterns to write brief stories that describe the picture or that use it as a point of departure for conversation or discussion. These stories can have a concrete, descriptive focus, or they can be based on students’ imaginations. Students read their stories aloud to the rest of the class.

4. Students write and perform dialogues that relate to the pictures and incorporate the target vocabulary items and sentence patterns. For beginners, provide the structure of the dialogue. For example:

   + Where is the ____________?
   - It’s ________________.
   + Are you sure?
   - Oh, I’m sorry. It’s not _______. It’s ________________.
Follow-up Activities

1. Divide the class into teams, and have them compete to ask and answer questions about the names and locations of numbered items in the picture. The team that remembers the most wins.

2. Have one student study the picture and mentally place himself somewhere in it. The other students ask him questions to find out where he is. They can only ask yes-no questions. Set a limit on the number of questions.

3. Have a student choose an item from the picture and act out a scene involving this item. The others guess what it is.

4. Ask students to identify items or aspects of the pictures that are different in their countries or cultures. Have them discuss these differences and explain or hypothesize why these differences exist.

5. Have students identify items from their countries or cultures that are not present in the pictures, but are relevant to the theme. Ask them to draw a picture that would be appropriate for their culture. Students then show and explain their pictures to the rest of the class. Discuss the commonalities and differences.

Research

1. Have students show a page of a place or topic to native speakers and invite them to describe what they see. Following this description, students interview native speakers about their personal experiences with items in the illustration and record these as stories that they report in class.
How to Use the Proverbs and Sayings

Section

This context represents proverbs or sayings that appear frequently in the written and spoken language. People use these expressions to explain or comment upon people, events, or circumstances in everyday life. They have both a literal meaning and an underlying moral or message that represents the folk wisdom of the culture. For the most part, the expressions illustrated reflect North American culture.

Identifying the Language

1. Have the students describe the actions or activities depicted in the drawing. Ask them to use the detail in the drawings to add to their descriptions.

2. Ask the students to try to identify the exact wording of the proverb or saying. Encourage students to offer as many possibilities as possible. List these on the blackboard, and have students decide which is the correct one. Give the students the wording if they are unable to identify it.

Practice

1. Have students describe the underlying meaning or message expressed in the proverb or saying. These expressions often carry many meanings, and it is important to elicit as many nuances or varying meanings as possible.

The meanings usually have both a literal and a figurative meaning. “Let sleeping dogs lie”, for example, literally exhorts us to not wake slumbering dogs in order to avoid their possible aggression, but it also applies figuratively to any situation where silence or avoidance of a particular topic is counseled.
2. Ask students to describe situations where the use of this expression would be appropriate, drawing from their own experiences. Have them recount these as brief stories or anecdotes, ending by stating the expression as a moral to the story.

3. Have students create brief dialogs or role plays in which the proverb is used as part of the conversation.

4. After students have learned a number of proverbs and sayings, ask them to include several of them as part of a story, dialogue, or role play.

Follow-Up Activities

Lead students in discussions that explore the following questions:

**Cultural Exploration**

1. List instances where you have read or heard this expression. Describe these instances in as much detail as possible.

2. What underlying cultural values or beliefs are expressed through this expression and the instances where it is used?

3. What experiences in the culture have you had that reflect the values or beliefs expressed in this expression?

4. How is this expression used in this culture? When is it appropriate to use this expression?

**Cultural Comparison**

5. Does this expression exist in your own culture?

6. What expressions in your culture convey similar values or beliefs?

7. How are these expressions used in your culture?

8. What similarities or differences do you see in this expression and a similar expression from your culture? What similarities or differences do you see in the cultural values and beliefs expressed in these proverbs and sayings?

**Personal Significance**

9. Do you agree with the values or beliefs expressed in this proverb or saying? Give reasons to support your answer.
10. Once students have named expressions from their own cultures, have them re-visit the cultural exploration discussion questions. This exploration will deepen understanding of both the similarities and the differences among the expressions. There is a tendency to assume that cultures are alike if they have expressions to address “similar” values or beliefs. However, this is not necessarily the case.

For example, the proverb “Many hands make light work” can represent the importance of cooperation and community in North American culture. On the surface, we might say that the African proverb “A single hand cannot lift the calabash to the head” represents similar values of cooperation and community. Although similarities do exist, these concepts of cooperation and community are very probably defined and practiced differently by Africans and North Americans. In discussing similarities and differences among proverbs, therefore, it is important to explore and highlight similarities and differences in the cultural practices that embody values and beliefs. This kind of detailed exploration leads to a fuller understanding of cultures.

Research

1. Have students interview native speakers about a proverb or saying, using the questions above as a guide.