

# Learners' Lives as Curriculum®

## Thematic Unit: **Speaking English in our Town**

*(This unit was written for Low Intermediate Speakers of English, but may be adapted for other levels.)*



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# 1. Opening Story

Speaking to Americans can be difficult because when I speak to someone, I think: “What if I make mistakes?” Or, “If I don’t remember the correct words...” Always, I am a little scared and nervous, thinking of what words I will have to say. Of course, it is good to talk because you can improve your English with practice.



(By Tania)

# 2. Playing with Story Language

Listen to your teacher read Tania’s story again. Fill in the missing words.

Speaking \_\_\_\_\_ Americans can be difficult \_\_\_\_\_ when I speak to someone, I \_\_\_\_\_: “What if I make \_\_\_\_\_?” Or, What \_\_\_\_\_ I don’t remember the \_\_\_\_\_ words...?” Always, I am \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of what words I have to say. It is \_\_\_\_\_ to try to talk because you can \_\_\_\_\_ your English.

### 3. Journal Writing



Learning a second language is difficult. Have you ever felt like Tania? Write about it in your journal.

### 4. Handy Phrases



What do you do when you do not understand something? Here are some handy phrases:

- Can you please repeat that?
- I don't understand.
- Can you please speak more slowly?
- Will you say that again please?
- I am learning English.
- I need my English Dictionary.

Work with a partner. Practice saying these phrases together.

Can you think of any other phrases that would be useful? Share them with your teacher and your class, and then write them below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Talking it Over



What are some places in your town where you speak English? Where do you hear English being spoken? Talk about it with a partner, and then practice writing below in sentence form. (Use the picture dictionary on the next page to help you!)

1. *I speak English when I go to my son's school.*

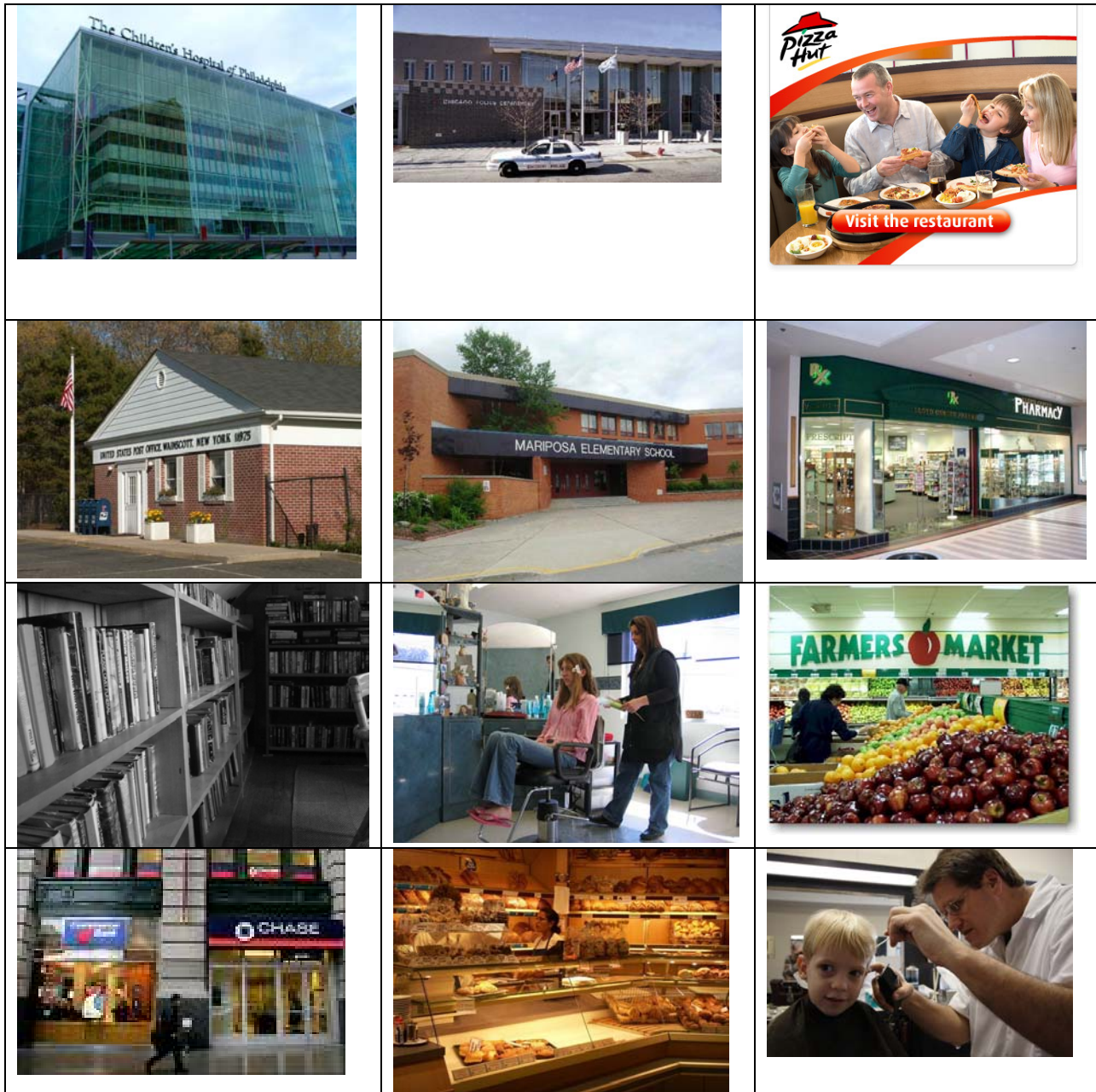
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

1. *I hear English when I go to the doctor's office.*

2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Picture Dictionary (Places in our Town)

Do you know the names for the places pictured below? Work with a partner to label them.



## 7. Vocabulary (Places in our Town)

Work with a partner. Fill in the missing words in each column. Challenge: How many *additional* words can you think of?

Place	People	Things	Verbs	Verbs, past tense
1. Hospital	Doctors, Nurses, Patients	Beds, Medicines	Help, Heal, Operate	Helped, Healed, Operated
2. Pharmacy			Shop, Fill, Wait, Read, Discuss	
3. Bank	Tellers, Customers			
4. School			Learn, Educate, Teach	
5. Hair Salon/ Barber Shop		Scissors, Chairs, Mirrors, Sinks		
6. Grocery Store				Shopped, Bought, Paid
7. Library	Librarians, Patrons, Students			

Share your answers with your teachers and classmates. What new words did you learn? Write them below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

## 9. Talking it over:

What are some ways that you can practice speaking English at home? *Brainstorm* with your partner, and then share your ideas with your classmates and your teacher.

I can:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

<b>IDIOM:</b>	<b>MEANING:</b>
Brainstorm	<i>To think of as many words or ideas about a topic as you can!</i>

## 10. More Stories from Allentown, Pennsylvania:

I'm just trying to learn English. It is especially difficult for me to talk on the phone. When I need to call UGI gas services, for example, I ask if someone speaks Spanish. I prefer to do business in Spanish because I am afraid to make a mistake and lose money!



(By Javier)

Speaking English is hard for me because Americans speak so fast. Now I understand a little bit. I try to “catch” the words, but I can’t always figure out what they say. When they speak too fast, I just say, “Oh, uh huh. Really?”



(By Martha)

## 11. Talking it Over

Read Javier and Martha’s stories again with your partner. What can you do in English in your town? Talk about it with your partner, and then fill in the chart below:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Must do in English</b>	<b>Can do in English</b>	<b>Prefer to do in my language</b>
1. Pay bills			
2. Get help in a store			
3. Order food in a restaurant			
4. Get a haircut			
5. Visit the Doctor			



## 12. Doing it in English

Interview your classmates by walking around your classroom and asking the following questions. Write the person's name in the space provided if their answer is yes. *Challenge: See how many different people you can talk to.*

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Has found a park in Allentown that they like to visit. (*Have you found a nice park in our town that you like to visit?*)

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Has found a church with services in their language. (*Have you found a church that has services in your language?*)

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Has found a museum in Allentown with free admission on Sundays. (*Have you found any museums that are free on Sundays?*)

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Has found a market that sells food from your country? (Yucca or plantains, for example) (*Have you found a market that sells foods from your country? What is the name of the market?*)

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Has found a restaurant that has good food or food from their country. (*Have you found a restaurant that has food from your country?*)

## 13. Ideas for Action: Places in our Town: A Newcomer's Guide to Allentown

Work with the people in your group to write about a place in Allentown that you think people would like to know about. See the examples below. Please be sure to include the following information:

- The name of the place
- The type of business it is (store, market, laundromat, etc.)
- The address and phone number
- What you liked about this place

Example 1:

**Dorney Park** by Gabriela and Ramona

Dorney Park is an amusement park that is close to our town. We like to go there because it is safe, clean and fun for all ages of people. They have rides for kids and a water park too. You can get a summer pass and go there many times for fun until October. The address is: 3830 Dorney Park Road Allentown, PA. 18104 (610) 395-3724

Example 2:

**Allentown Art Museum** by Cesar and David

This museum is a good place to visit because it has art from all over the world. It has art from the ancient of times and it had art that is more modern. You can also visit the display with gemstones from around the world. That is beautiful and very interesting. The admission is free on Sunday. The address is: 31 North Fifth Street Allentown, PA. 18101 (610) 432-4333

## 14. Checklist for Learning



*Check the vocabulary that you know:*

**Places:**

- |                                      |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Store       | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank             | <input type="checkbox"/> Police Station |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy    | <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery Store    | <input type="checkbox"/> Deli           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laundromat  | <input type="checkbox"/> Market           | <input type="checkbox"/> ATM Machine    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy    | <input type="checkbox"/> Library          | <input type="checkbox"/> Bakery         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant  | <input type="checkbox"/> Auto Repair Shop | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barber Shop | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital         | <input type="checkbox"/> Church         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hair Salon  | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor's Office  | <input type="checkbox"/> Amusement Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School      | <input type="checkbox"/> Post Office      | <input type="checkbox"/> Nail Salon     |

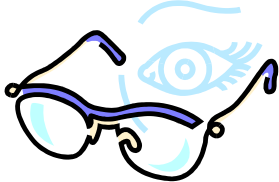
**Prepositions:**

- |                                 |                               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> on     | <input type="checkbox"/> in   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> off    | <input type="checkbox"/> at   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> under  | <input type="checkbox"/> from |
| <input type="checkbox"/> over   | <input type="checkbox"/> to   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> across | <input type="checkbox"/> out  |

**Handy Phrases:**

- \_\_\_ Can you please repeat that?
- \_\_\_ I don't understand.
- \_\_\_ Can you please speak more slowly?
- \_\_\_ Will you say that again please?
- \_\_\_ I am learning English.
- \_\_\_ I need my English Dictionary.

## 15. Looking Back



A. In this unit, I learned:

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B. Something I would like to practice is:

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C. What I liked best about this unit was:

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D. What I liked least about this unit was:

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