

Appendix 5 – Lesson Plans for Class Three

Class Three – Lesson Plans

Objectives:

1. To help students understand that the study of language is a science
2. To demonstrate that like most sciences, language is rule-governed and those rules consist of more than grammar rules.
3. To show that language, like chemistry, physics, and even math, is made up of units that are combined through specific rules to create larger units.
4. To demonstrate that the smallest unit of language is meaningful sounds (phonemes).
5. To demonstrate that phonemes combine to create morphemes, which are the smallest units of meaning in a language.

Brief Review of Course to Date:

10 minutes – What is Language? (Students can be asked to get out their handout titled “What is Language?”)

Language has the following characteristics:

- *Creativity/Productivity*
 - There is no limit to the number of sentences or phrases that can be made. New, never-before-heard sentences can be made all the time.
- *Arbitrariness*
 - Words in a language are not necessarily connected to meaning.
- *Displacement*
 - We can talk about people and things we can't see. That means we can talk about these things and people in the past as well as people and things many miles away from us.
- *Rule Governed*
 - Language has rules for sounds, words, and sentences. It also has rules for how we use language.
- *Traditional Transmission*
 - We are born with the ability to use language, but language itself is learned.

10 minutes: What is Linguistics? (Students can be asked to get out their handout titled “What is Linguistics?”)

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. Linguists ask the same kind of questions about language that other scientists ask about their area of study:

- What is it?
 - What is it made of?
 - Where does it come from?
 - How does it work?
- } Write these on the board

Linguists try to answer the question “What is Language?”

Is there a difference between communication and language?

Do animals have language?

Animals do not have the same thought capacity as humans. We know that from studying their brains.

However, Koko the gorilla has made linguists question earlier definitions of language.

Linguistics also try to understand what language is made of. They look at the building blocks of language. The smallest building blocks are the sounds. The study of sounds in a language is called phonology.

Phonology Begin by asking students how many sounds English has – how many words did they come up with? (This should take only a couple of minutes.)

15-20 minutes: Ask students to look at first handout about sounds. Point out how we make sounds.

Students can make sounds using different parts of their mouths. This picks up where last class left off.

Make “uh” sound and hold it.

Round and unround lips.

Open and close jaw.

Open jaw and round lips.

Move back of tongue up and forward (from *ah* to *ee* sound).

Making *ee* sound, round lips.

Close lips.

Let students know that these are just some of the sounds we can make. We can also use our tongues and teeth and we can change the way we let air out of our mouths.

We can stop the air and then let it out. We do this when we make a *k* sound. We stop the air by pressing the back of our tongue against the back of our throat.

We can let the air out with some friction. We do this when we make a *sh* sound. Our tongue is near the roof of our mouths and we let air out through our clenched teeth.

We can also make our vocal chords vibrate. For example, we make two different sounds when we stop air with our two lips and then let it out. In one case we use our vocal chords and in the other we don't. This is the difference between a *b* and a *p*. Have students hold their hands over their throats and make a *p* sound. (This should not be *puh*. That is, the vowel at the end should be left off. Then have them make a *b* sound. They should feel their throats vibrate with a *b*, but not with the *p*. All vowels are made with the vocal chords vibrating.

15 minutes: Handout chart for English phonemic

Students can work in their groups to fill in their charts.

For their homework they were supposed to write a list of words with the sounds of English. They can use that list to help them fill in the chart. They will have to think about how they make the sounds they make to create words.

BREAK – till 10 or 10:05, depending on when the break started, which itself depends on how far students got with their charts

15 minutes: Figuring out the number of sounds in English

Ask students to count the number of sounds on their charts. (There are 24.) Ask them how many letters in the alphabet we have. See if anyone sees a problem. (They haven't considered vowels yet.)

Explain that linguists use a special alphabet of symbols called the phonetic alphabet. Each symbol represents only one sound. And each sound has only one symbol.

Hand out the English phonemic chart with the phonetic symbols.

Hand out the vowel phoneme chart.

Ask students to count sounds there. (There are 11.)

Ask students how many sounds there are altogether (33).

Diphthongs

Tell students that some linguists sometimes count diphthongs as separate sounds, but they are actually two sounds.

OI boy
 aI bite
 aU cow

} Write on board:

Ask students to write these symbols somewhere on their vowel charts. These are the symbols for the diphthongs.

International Phonetic Alphabet

Tell students that linguists use symbols for the sounds in all languages, not just English. There is a symbol for every sound used in all the world's languages.

Hand out the international phonetic alphabet chart. If they are interested in hearing any of the sounds, we will give them a website they can visit where they can click on the symbols of the chart and hear the sounds they represent.

10- 15 minutes: Using the Phonetic Alphabet

Ask students to try to write their name using the phonetic alphabet. They can write them on the board once they think they've figured it out.

10 minutes: More about sounds

Handout final sheet "More About Sounds."

Ask students to guess which words in the chart at the top of the page relate to large things and which relate to small things.

Explain that although most sounds by themselves have no meaning, the *i* sounds seem to make us think of small things while the *ooo* sounds make us think of large things. This is true in many languages, even though the words in the languages are different!

Till end of class:

Ask students to recall the game Mad Gab and ask what they had to do to guess the correct phrase. Hopefully, they can understand that to make words, sounds have to have breaks, pauses, to indicate where one word ends and the other begins.

We use all the sounds in English to create "morphemes," which are groups of letters with meaning. We'll learn more about those next class. For now, think of these groups of sounds as words.

Play phonetic game till end of class.