

## Developing Grammar I: Simple Present Tense

This set of activities is designed for students at the high-beginning to low-intermediate levels. The ideal teaching context would be an ESL situation where students are surrounded by the L2-speaking community. The teaching goal is to first raise the students' awareness about the simple present tense, then to see how the tense works in recycling activities, and finally to produce the tense in information gap activities.

### Input Processing Activities

*Alison Fukuchi*

#### *Activity 1*

Part I. Match the superstition in Column A with its outcome in Column B.

COLUMN A

1. When I **spill** pepper
2. When I **cut** my hair on Tuesday
3. When I **blow** out birthday candles
4. When I **see** 5 crows
5. When my right hand **itches**

COLUMN B

- a. my wish **comes** true.
- b. my friend **comes** to visit.
- c. my day **is** bad.
- d. I **become** rich.
- e. I **get** sick.

Part II. Answer the following questions about Column B from part I.

1. Who **comes** to visit? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What **comes** true? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who **gets** sick? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What **is** bad? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who **becomes** rich? \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Activity 2*

Work with a group. For each word in **bold**, try to guess the ending. Is it pronounced /s/, /z/ or /iz/?

##### Group 1

1. A black cat **crosses** your path. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Maria **walks** under a ladder. \_\_\_\_\_
3. A robin **flies** into your house. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Hideo **starts** a vacation on a Friday. \_\_\_\_\_

##### Group 2

1. Dan **breaks** a mirror. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sophia **hears** a cricket singing. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Miguel **sees** a ladybug on his hand. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Chris **sneezes** 3 times before breakfast. \_\_\_\_\_

##### Group 3

1. Mika **finds** a four-leaf clover. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Jenny **opens** an umbrella in the house. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Heather **kisses** a frog. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Yuta **puts** a hat on a bed. \_\_\_\_\_

*Activity 3*

Work together in your group to decide whether the superstitions are good luck or bad luck.

Good Luck

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Bad Luck

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. A black cat crosses your path.
2. You walk under a ladder.
3. A robin flies into your house.
4. You start a vacation on a Friday.
5. You break a mirror.
6. You hear a cricket singing.
7. You see a ladybug on his hand.
8. You sneeze 3 times before breakfast.
9. You find a four-leaf clover.
10. You open an umbrella in the house.
11. You kiss a frog.
12. You put a hat on a bed.

*Activity 4*

Interview your classmates to find out who believes in superstitions. Write the students' names and circle whether they agree or disagree with the superstition.

\_\_\_\_\_ **believes/ does not believe** a black cat is bad luck.

\_\_\_\_\_ **believes/ does not believe** a robin is good luck.

\_\_\_\_\_ **believes/ does not believe** a hat on a bed is bad luck.

\_\_\_\_\_ **believes/ does not believe** an open umbrella in the house is bad luck.

\_\_\_\_\_ **believes/ does not believe** a four-leaf clover is good luck.

\_\_\_\_\_ **believes/ does not believe** 3 sneezes before breakfast is good luck.

\_\_\_\_\_ **believes/ does not believe** a ladybug on your body is good luck.

\_\_\_\_\_ **believes/ does not believe** a cricket singing is good luck.

### Notes for Teachers and Answer Keys

These activities aim to raise the students' awareness about the simple present tense without actually producing the target form.

#### Activity 1

##### Part I

1. C                      2. D                      3. A                      4. E                      5. B

##### Part II

1. My friend comes to visit.
2. My dream comes true.
3. I get sick.
4. My day is bad.
5. I become rich.

#### Activity 2

Instructions:

1. Divide class into groups of 3. Each group gets a set of 4 sentences. Students can guess the pronunciation of the *-s* ending of the words in bold.
2. While students complete this activity, the teacher should make 3 columns on the board (1 for each sound).
3. Students from each group write their words on the board under the pronunciation they guessed.

##### Group 1

1. A black cat **crosses** your path.                         iz
2. Maria **walks** under a ladder.                         s
3. A robin **flies** into your house.                         z
4. Hideo **starts** a vacation on a Friday.                         s

##### Group 2

1. Dan **breaks** a mirror.                         s
2. Sophia **hears** a cricket singing.                         z
3. Miguel **sees** a ladybug on his hand.                         z
4. Chris **sneezes** 3 times before breakfast.                         iz

##### Group 3

1. Mika **finds** a four-leaf clover.                         z
2. Jenny **opens** an umbrella in the house.                         z
3. Heather **kisses** a frog.                         iz
4. Yuta **puts** a hat on a bed.                         s

Activity 3

Count off students from 1 to 3 to get 1 student from each group in the new groups. Students work together to decide if the superstitions are good luck or bad luck. The teacher can reveal the following American superstitions after this or the next activity.

Good Luck

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_X\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_X\_\_\_\_  
\_X\_\_\_\_  
\_X\_\_\_\_  
\_X\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_X\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Bad Luck

\_X\_\_\_\_  
\_X\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_X\_\_\_\_  
\_X\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_X\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_X\_\_\_\_

1. A black cat crosses your path.
2. You walk under a ladder.
3. A robin flies into your house.
4. You start a vacation on a Friday.
5. You break a mirror.
6. You hear a cricket singing.
7. You see a ladybug on his hand.
8. You sneeze 3 times before breakfast.
9. You find a four-leaf clover.
10. You open an umbrella in the house.
11. You kiss a frog.
12. You put a hat on a bed.

The teacher should note that the answers may vary even among Americans.

Activity 4

Answers will vary

## Recycling Activities

Tai Vo

### Activity 1

Read the following paragraph and pay attention to the words in bold.

Every year, millions of people **immigrate** to the United States.<sup>1</sup> Mika's family **is** one of them. Her parents often **have** problems. They **don't speak** English. They **don't learn** English fast. Mika **learns** English before her parents, so she **translates** for them. She usually **helps** her parents. Sometimes, she **helps** them pay the rent to the landlord. She often **talks** with her parents' doctors when they **visit** them. Mika's parents **depend** on her. This **is** a big duty for her. But her parents sometimes **feel** sad and unable to help. Life **is** often difficult for new immigrant families.

*Note.*

<sup>1</sup> Source: Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org>, retrieved on October 7, 2007.

Now answer the following questions:

1. Do Mika's parents often have troubles? If yes, what are they?
2. Does Mika study English or French?
3. What does Mika do to help her parents?
4. Is this a big responsibility for her?
5. What do her parents think about this?

### Activity 2

With a partner, work on the following sentences. Student A will write down the exact wording as the teacher reads the sentences. Student B will only listen. After the teacher finishes reading all sentences, you will work together to correct Student A's sentences. Student B will then read the sentences aloud to the whole class.

1. Mary / go / to school everyday.
2. I / be / 20 years old.
3. My classmates / come / from Thailand.
4. My parents / not / go / to work on Sunday.
5. Mika / be / not / American.
6. What / be / the best way / to prevent milk from turning sour?
7. My mom / kiss / me every morning.
8. Mary / open / a box / to get her gift.
9. You / sneeze / when the weather / change?
10. My dad / watch / television everyday.

*Activity 3*

Get into two teams (A and B) and write ten *Wh*-questions in the simple present tense to test the other team's knowledge about the United States. For example,

- Where does the president of the United States live?
- When do Americans vote?

Team A then asks Team B a question. Team B can discuss before they give the answer to team A. Then Team B takes their turn and asks Team A a question, and so on.

## Notes for Teachers and Answer Keys

### Part I

Have students read the text and work on the questions individually first, then with a partner.

Answers:

1. Yes, they do. They don't speak English.
2. Mika studies English.
3. She translates for her parents and helps them talk to the landlord and doctors.
4. Yes, it is.
5. Her parents feel sad.

### Part II

Read the sentences slowly and clearly to the students. Repeat the sentences if necessary.

1. Mary goes to school everyday.
2. I am 20 years old.
3. My classmates come here from Thailand.
4. My parents do not go to work on Sunday.
5. Mika is not an American.
6. What is the best way to prevent milk from turning sour?
7. My mom kisses me every morning.
8. Mary opens a box to get her gift.
9. Do you sneeze when the weather change?
10. My dad watches television everyday.

### Part III

Score 1 point for each grammatically correct question. Score 1 point for each correct answer.

The team with the most points is the winner.

Some sample questions include:

1. What are the colors of the American flag?
2. When do Americans celebrate Independence Day?
3. Who was the first President of the United States?
4. Who is the President of the United States today?
5. What is the United States Capitol?
6. Where is the White House located?
7. What is the national anthem of the United States?
8. Which President freed the slaves?

## Information Gap Activity

Chris Ferry

Work with your partner to find the missing information.

Student "Cold"

### Part I

How often does . . . ?					
	watch TV	study English	wash clothes	go to the park	drive to work
Bob	often	seldom			always
Sally		often	rarely	everyday	
Bill	rarely			often	usually
Hee-Jin		rarely	often		
Hoa	never				often
Sayoko			never		
Alice	sometimes	everyday		seldom	
Your Partner					

### Part II

Does ... have a ...?					
	bicycle	mustache	dictionary	comb	boyfriend or girlfriend
Bob	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Sally		No			
Bill		Yes			No
Hee-Jin			No	No	
Hoa	No		No		Yes
Sayoko		No		Yes	No
Alice	Yes		Yes		
Your Partner					



Work with your partner to find the missing information.

Student “Hot”

Part I

How often does . . . ?					
	watch TV	study English	wash clothes	go to the park	drive to work
Bob			sometimes	never	
Sally	never				never
Bill		never	never		
Hee-Jin	everyday			sometimes	seldom
Hoa		sometimes	sometimes	usually	
Sayoko	seldom	often		everyday	rarely
Alice			often		never
Your Partner					

Part II

Does ... have a ...?					
	bicycle	mustache	dictionary	comb	boyfriend or girlfriend
Bob		Yes			
Sally	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Bill	No		No	No	
Hee-Jin	Yes	No			No
Hoa		Yes		Yes	
Sayoko	Yes		No		
Alice		No		No	Yes
Your Partner					

### Notes for Teachers

Put students in pairs. Each pair has a “Hot” student and a “Cold” student. Distribute the “Cold” set to the “Cold” students and the “Hot” set to the “Hot” students. Tell students not to look at each other’s card. Circulate around the classroom to check students’ progress and correct any mistakes in the usage of the simple present tense.

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