



ACTIVITY: **I'm a banana. What are you?**

PURPOSE: This activity for English-as-a-second-language (ESL) learners combines listening, speaking, and reading skills, and can be used to:

- Teach and reinforce the correct language structures for asking questions and exchanging information
- Review recently taught vocabulary
- Practice categorization
- Divide students in a large classroom into smaller groups
- Break up "seat-time" by getting students moving around the room and talking to each other

THEORY: Effective ESL instruction needs to include activities where ESL students interact with each other and have an opportunity to use English to negotiate meaning (Hellermann, 2005). These types of activities provide students with an opportunity to test vocabulary and language structures in a safe environment, while learning the social practices of engaging in conversation with native English speakers.

Further Reading?

John Hellermann, "Turn-Taking and Opening Interactions," *Focus on Basics* Volume 8, (A) (November 2005).

Steps:

1. Decide how many categories of objects you want and what the categories will be. (See examples below.)
2. Make a list of items in each category. Categories should have roughly the same number of items, and the total number of items should equal the number of students.
3. Give each student an index card with one of the items written on it.
4. Ask students to walk around the room saying, "I'm a [item on the card]. What are you?" Their objective is to find other students who belong in the same category.
5. Once students have identified everyone that belongs in their category, they should identify their category.
6. Some words may seem like they belong to more than one category. For example, chest might be a body part or a piece of furniture. In this case you will want to tell the students in the category they have too many people and let them figure out who can belong to another category.
7. Give students three or four minutes to brainstorm other items in the category.
8. When time is up, ask a member of each group to tell what category the group members belong to and read aloud the items on the brainstormed list.

Suggestions:

This activity gets students moving about the room and talking to each other. Give students extra time to continue these conversations if they seem interested in what they are discussing.

- Buildings found in your community: bank, drugstore, library, post office
- People connected to government: mayor, judge, council person, police officer
- Parts of a letter: date, address, greeting, signature
- Things found in a store: shelf, counter, cart, aisle
- Modes of transportation: bus, car, train, truck
- Things related to banks: account, checkbook, debit card, statement
- People in a school: principal, teacher, aide, student
- Furniture: bookcase, coffee table, bed, dresser
- Parts of a body: arm, chest, foot, neck
- Injuries: bruise, burn, sprain, cut
- People working in a restaurant: waiter, hostess, chef, busboy
- Family relationships: aunt, uncle, niece, nephew

Here are some cards you can use to begin this activity.



bank

mayor

drugstore

judge

library

council person

post office

police officer

date

shelf

address

counter

greeting

cart

signature

aisle



bus

account

car

checkbook

train

debit card

truck

statement

principal

bookcase

teacher

coffee table

aide

bed

student

dresser



arm

bruise

chest

burn

foot

sprain

neck

cut

waiter

aunt

hostess

uncle

chef

niece

busboy

nephew