

Making Students Proficient in Hindi

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Hindi is a critical need language in America and it is easy to learn if proper learning techniques are applied. I have an MBA degree and I am a corporate consultant by profession. Teaching Hindi is my passion. My teaching strategies are to help students become more proficient in Hindi quickly and easily. This objective is achieved by integrating the 5 C's (Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, & Communities) in well-structured lesson plans and activities:

Communication

1. Build goodwill and effective public relations by speaking in other people's mother tongue. First the students learn the alphabet and verbs. Their lessons start with basic questions.

1. What do you want?
2. What do you like?
3. Can I go to the bathroom?

Students are able to relate to these simple and practical questions with their own every day activities and learn quickly.

Culture, Communities & Comparisons

I sponsor four very active clubs:

- Hindi National Honor Society
- Hindu Students Association
- South Asian Student Association
- Yoga Club, where members learn yoga and meditation once a week.

Students interact with local Indian organizations and Hindi speakers by volunteering in their programs. Major Indian festivals are celebrated in the school. Some other cultural events that we celebrate are:

- Food of India Day
- Inter High School Indian Dance Competition
- Indian Cooking
- Henna and Rangoli

We invite guest speakers too. Active participation in these clubs and cultural events helps students understand the similarities and differences between Indian and other cultures and languages.

Connections

1. Read, think and write - Students are encouraged to read and make their own personal connections with a text or a story. They learn to answer these basic questions:

1. What does this story remind you of?
2. Can you relate to the characters in the story?

Students write short essays on the salient points of the given texts and stories.

Learning a second language should be a fun-filled and stress-free experience. I have prepared a Hindi curriculum for Bellaire High School. Grammar and word association through pictures play an important role in teaching Hindi. I give importance to conversation over reading and writing. English grammar and sentence structure are taught first and then I show them how it works in

Hindi. After learning Hindi grammar and a group of verbs that change in the same way to show number, person, etc., students are able to create sentences and expressions in past, present and future tense on their own. In my Elementary and Intermediate Hindi books each unit covers a theme. Learning materials and the order of learning are selected by the students themselves. Proficiency in conversation is attained by repetitive practice in small groups and script presentations over a period of time. Pictures of related vocabulary & multi-media are an integral part of teaching. It is so simple and interesting that a number of students are inspired to study Hindi beyond secondary education.

Achieving the optimal rate of return and “work smart, not hard” are two rules of business that I apply in teaching Hindi also. My students achieve proficiency in reading and writing letters and words in the first semester and this is done in a very nonconventional way by using transliterated Hindi format of words they already know in Hindi. शुभ कामनाएँ

For the intermediate level, I have developed short passages in the essay format such as "about me, my family, my school, my country" and move into thematic conversations like sports, dress, festivals, food of India, visit to a doctor's office with related pictures and a list of vocabulary. This process improves students' conversational Hindi also and their ability to describe an incident or a situation.

For developing vocabulary, teaching the writing system and demonstration of grammar, I have created a CD called *Learning Elementary Hindi By Pictures*. There are three sections in the CD. The first section covers the pictures for vocabulary, the second section demonstrates grammar and the third section covers the writing system.

I teach eight levels of Hindi in 5 class hours (Hindi 1 through Hindi 5 regular and IB). All of my classes have physically & mentally challenged both G/T and IB students. I take the G/T students to help teach the Special Education students. Our student population includes Hispanic, Afro-American, Caucasian, Asian and Heritage students.

A lot of students learn more than one foreign language in our school. I use comparative feedback from students at all levels to improve my own teaching skills and I find that students learn a high level of Hindi compared to other critical need languages each year. I also have a very high approval rating for my teaching style from a number of former students who continue to learn Hindi in Higher Education institutions.