

TOPIC 3: LANGUAGES AND OTHER SKILLS

Unit 1: My languages

Overview of topic

Learners identify their languages (plurilingual repertoire) and when they use them.

I speak Arabic. I understand French. I can say a few words in Spanish.

Skills

Speaking and listening

- Learners tell each other about languages they know (Sc/E1.4a, Lr/E1.2b, Lr/E1.5d).

Reading, writing and phonics

- Read and recognise names of languages and places (Rw/E1.1a).
- Decode simple, familiar words and recognise letters of alphabet (Rw/E1.2a, Rw/E1.3a).
- Focus on similarities and differences between language and country names (Rw/E1.2a).
- Read, understand and write a simple sentence linked to the topic (Rs/E1.1a, Ws/E1.1a).
- Spell correctly some familiar words (Ww/E1.1a, Ww/E1.1b, Ww/E1.1c).
- Say the first sound in the name of their languages (Sc/E1.1b).

Language points

- Proper nouns and use of capital letters for languages and countries.
- Some common simple quantifiers, e.g. *a little, some*.
- Sentence structures: *I speak/understand/read/write + language. I speak with + (person)*.
- Revise *I can ...*

Materials

Activity 1

Resource 3.1.1 (Language portrait templates A and B).

Activity 2

Resource 3.1.2 (Key words) and/or create your own based on your knowledge of the main language spoken in the group. Marker pens and blank cards/shapes to scribe additional languages mentioned.

Activity 3

Resource 3.1.3 (Sentence stems) - individual strips or whole sheets as appropriate for learners working at this level.

Activity 4

Language portraits, learners' words and sentences, a large sheet of paper/wallpaper. Resource 3.1.4 (Speech bubbles), glue and scissors.

Additional differentiation and extension activities

Print or project TEXT 7 or 8.

Activity 1

My language portrait (speaking and listening)

- Draw a large outline figure on the board (or use project resource 3.1.1) and explain this is you. Tell the learners a little about languages you know and say a few words where you can, especially if these are in languages used by some of the learners.
- As you do this, quickly colour in sections of the body to reflect how much of each language you know, e.g. *My name's (x). I speak English. I speak some French. I understand a little Sylheti. I can say a few words in Arabic.*
- Give out copies of the language portrait templates (Resource 3.1.1A or B) or blank sheets of paper and coloured pens. Ask learners to create their own language portrait. If possible, or with support from learners who share languages, encourage learners to include all languages and linguistic varieties/dialects.
- When learners have finished, invite the group to stand in a circle, hold up their language portraits and take turns in saying something about themselves to the whole group. Support/prompt with target structure, where appropriate, but focus more on communication at this stage, which may be single words/names for languages or short sentences: *I speak I understand a little I can say a few words in ...*
- Encourage learners to acknowledge shared languages: *Me too!* (As learners name any additional languages, scribe these onto cards/shapes to use in the next activity). *This activity is adapted from the Council of Europe's toolkit: *Linguistic support for adult refugees* <https://www.coe.int/en/web/language-support-for-adult-refugees/list-of-all-tools>



Activity 2

My languages (reading and phonics)

- Using the language cards (Resource 3.1.2) and additional cards scribed in Activity 1, hold up each card, say the language and stick in a different place on the walls.
- When all the languages have been named, point to each one and repeat the word. Drill and check learners can recognise the words. Focus on syllables and initial, medial or final consonants.
- Ask the learners to stand in the centre of the room, say the name of a language at random and ask all the learners who speak or even just understand a little of that language to go and stand next to the word. Repeat until all the languages have been included.

Differentiation/extension activities

- Invite learners individually or in pairs/groups to take a card for one of their languages. Ask learners to focus on the first letter only and stand in alphabetical order holding up the card for all to see. When everyone is happy they are in the correct order, ask each person/pair or group to say the first sound in the name for their language, e.g. /æ/ for Amharic.
- This activity can be adapted into English for Action's Stepping Stones activity (<http://www.lucid.ac.uk/what-we-do/impact/english-language-teaching-for-non-english-speaking-mothers/access-the-esol-stepping-stones-materials/>) for learners who have stronger speaking and listening skills. Languages can be written onto or cut out in card in different stepping stone shapes and put on the floor. Learners then move onto or next to different stepping stones based on the teacher's instruction, e.g. *a language you learned at school; a language you speak with your family; a language you love; a language you want to learn, etc.*

Activity 3

My languages (reading and writing)

- Refer back to your language portrait. Repeat your sentences but elicit each language and ask for a volunteer to hand you the correct card to stick on the board, e.g. (*I speak ...?*) *English*. (*I understand a little ...?*) *Sylheti*. (*I can say a few words in ...?*) *Arabic*.
- Now elicit and scribe the stem for each sentence on the board, but leave a blank space for the languages, then choral read together, e.g. *I speak.... I understand a little ... I can say a few words in ...*.
- Invite each learner (or pair of learners for larger groups) to pick up a language card and stick it on the board, then read aloud the sentence they chose.
- Ask learners to write about their languages. Depending on level, learners do one or more of the following writing activities:
 - Single word copying and handwriting practice using language cards (Resource 3.1.2), tracing paper or Template 5 with important words you scribe for them.
 - Sentence completion using Resource 3.1.3 (Sentence stems)
 - Sentence writing onto lined paper using word cards as needed.

Differentiation/extension activities

- Learners who finish their writing before others can form pairs and tell each other about their language portraits/languages and maybe teach each other a few words.

Activity 4

Our languages (writing)

- Set context for the final activity with a class discussion about languages and the benefits of being bi/multilingual – adjusted according to the level of the group. Ask learners simple questions such as: *Which languages do you speak at home? Which languages do you use with your family? With your friends? Which language do you love?* This is an important opportunity to support learners to feel positive about their languages and the benefits of bilingualism.
- Use a large piece of paper/wallpaper and ask learners to work together to create a display for their classroom/centre using their language portraits, words and sentences.
- Give out speech bubble shapes (Resource 3.1.4 or Template 5) or cut out bubbles on different coloured card/paper and ask everyone to write 'Hello' in their language(s) to stick next to their language portrait on the display.

Differentiation/extension activities

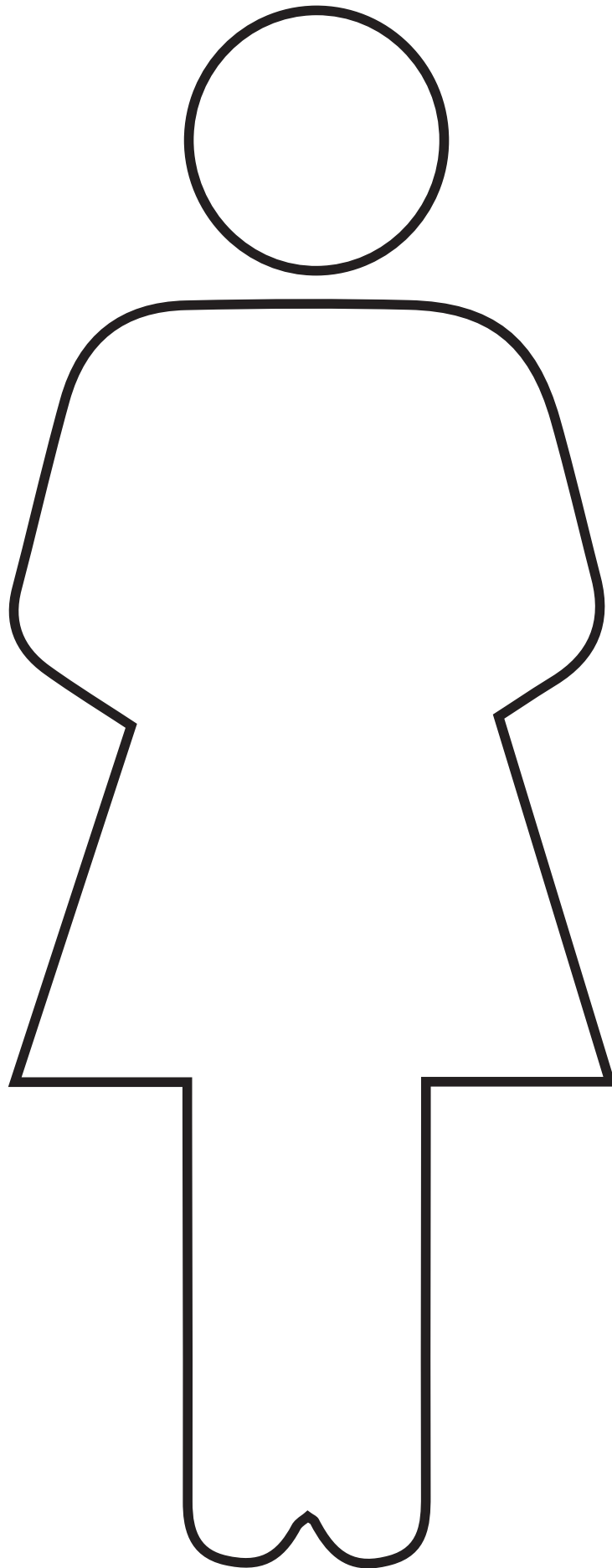
- If necessary, ask learners to support each other and/or use a translation app and help to scribe 'Hello' for some learners' languages.
- Some learners can work together to write new sentences to highlight shared and common languages in the class, e.g. *Hibo, Sara and Ali all speak Somali*
- If your group all share the same language, encourage them to write more than 'Hello' in their language.
- If your ESOL class is for parents, use this unit as an opportunity to stress the importance and value of using main/first languages with their children and the range of benefits this brings.
- For background information and classroom activity ideas on bilingualism, see the Family Skills toolkit: <https://www.learningunlimited.co/publications/free-resources>

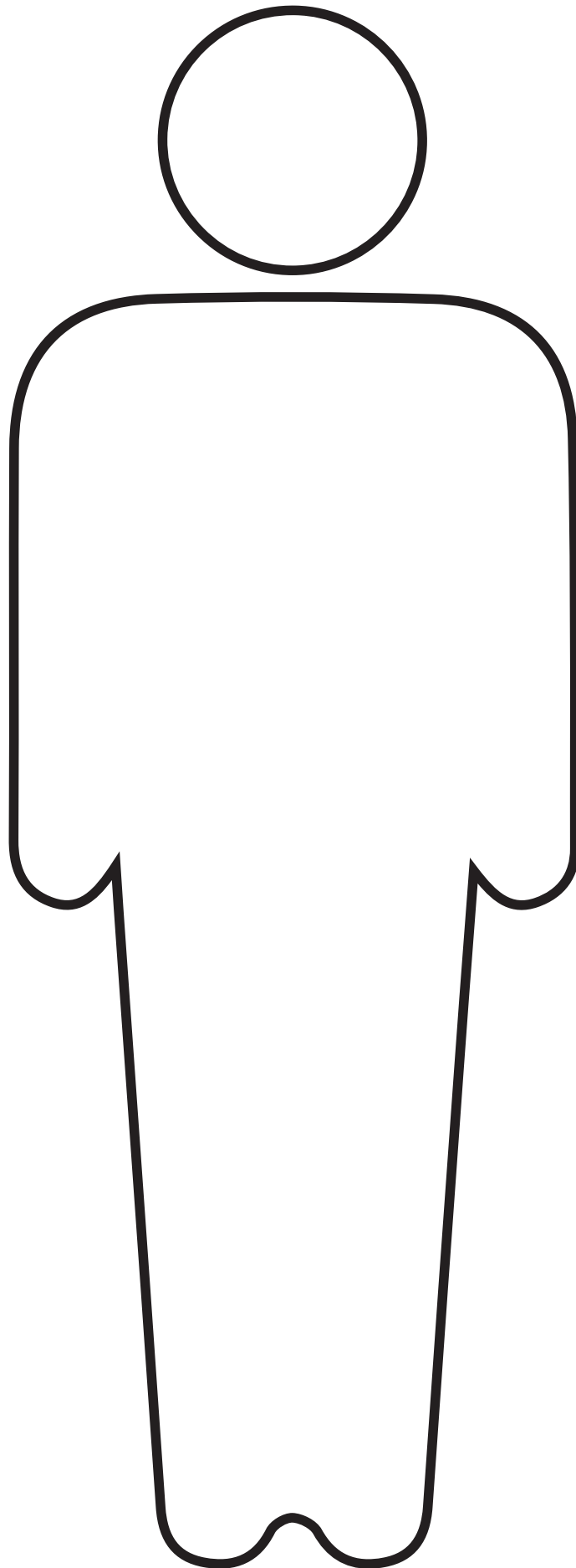
Additional differentiation/extension activities:

- For learners working at single word level, encourage them to use the *Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check* sheets (Template 3) for words they need to learn and spell.
- Languages bingo: learners have a board with the languages from the flashcards and have to colour the languages they hear. For example, *My name's (x). I speak English.* (colour it green) *I speak some French.* (Blue) *I understand a little Sylheti.* (Yellow) *I can say a few words in Arabic.*

Follow up ideas

- Learners can now include languages when they introduce each other to new arrivals to the class, e.g. *This is (name). She/He comes from (country). She/He speaks (language/s) and she/he understands (language/s).*





Amharic

Arabic

Bengali

Daro

English

French

Hausa

Pashto

Somali

Spanish

Sylheti

Tigrinya

I speak

I understand

I can say a few words in

