

"La Fruta" - Unit Background

This **La Fruta** unit is one of our new units that we recommend using as a great way to introduce a foreign language to your classes. This unit is a fantastic "starter unit" and can easily be used if you are teaching Spanish earlier than KS2 in your school.

Many schemes of work try to avoid structured "lessons" for young foreign language learners. We disagree with this approach! Young language learners (early years upwards) need a well thought-out and planned lesson to facilitate language learning, just as they would in any other subject. Young learners require age appropriate, fun, engaging lessons built around a clear learning intention and using solid teaching methodology. We provide structured lessons and fully guided activities so you can focus on delivering the lessons in the fun, expressive and energetic way you deliver all of your lessons.

Towards the end of this Early Language Learning Unit we provide the opportunity for a roleplay activity. This would obviously require the need for children to use both question and answer vocabulary. We appreciate that this may be quite challenging for very young learners. For this reason, we've added "Extra Challenge" sections to the end of each lesson (clearly labelled on each PowerPoint). This enables you to be flexible with the quantity and complexity of language you introduce to your class. You have the option to teach a short, simple lesson (predominantly vocabulary based) or the option to go for a slightly longer lesson perhaps introducing a short phrase or question. The choice is yours! Lessons can of course be split and don't be frightened to spread a 6-week unit over 8, 10 or 12 weeks. You and your class decide the pace so go at a speed you can all cope with. The resources are driven by you.

The focus for young language learners early in their foreign language learning journey should be on **speaking** and **listening** skills. Children that grow up in a bilingual environment learn two languages from birth but it is still the oral (speaking) and auditory (listening) skills that they develop first. It is for this reason that we also focus on these skills first. We will introduce **reading** and **writing** skills later in the unit. There will be some simple tasks based on these skills at the end of each lesson but nothing too long or demanding. Specific focus on each skill (not writing) appears towards the end of each lesson, so you may choose to omit them if your class is particularly young or is unable to read and write confidently yet.

The lessons in this unit are bright, clear, colourful and very pictorial. There is very little written language on the PowerPoints in the first weeks. We provide lots of opportunity for children to hear and repeat (as a group and/or individually) accurate and authentic Spanish phrases. The lessons are deliberately quite short. We suggest a maximum of 30 minutes, although 20 minutes may well be sufficient for young learners in KS1 or earlier. If timetables allow, then we would suggest shorter bursts of regular Spanish as this would be of maximum value to the children. For young learners, little and often works extremely well!

The PowerPoints may look like they contain quite a few slides for a short lesson but they are designed to be delivered quite quickly and provide the best possible support and scaffold for the teacher delivering. As mentioned previously, the "Extra Challenge" section of slides at the end of each PowerPoint are always optional and are designed for classes that have longer lessons or wish to offer more challenge and stretch to their pupils. This is made clear in the Teacher Support Notes.

Fruits are a great vehicle for foreign language learning as they provide excellent visual clues for the children and they will be able to recognise these fruits from everyday life. Using themes and topics that young children can easily connect with and recognise really helps when learning a foreign language.

In this unit we slowly teach the children the vocabulary for ten different fruits. We introduce the fruits in two sets of five with lots of opportunities for listening and repeating. Pupils will be given activities to consolidate the new words they are learning before finally being asked to recall these words on their own. The lessons are based around our tried and tested Language Angels methodology and things are presented in a particular order because that is how the brain responds best to learning a second language. What may seem long and tedious on paper actually happens quite quickly in the lessons. The children will be engaged from start to finish and, before they know it, will be recalling their new fruit vocabulary from memory - not just in this lesson, but in the weeks, months and years to come.

Whilst we focus on replicating authentic and accurate Spanish pronunciation in this unit (with little focus on the written word), we have created some simple but suitable worksheets for consolidation should you wish to use them. (We recommend you give them a go - they're great fun and will help consolidate your class teaching.) Once we feel speaking and listening have been sufficiently embedded we introduce the optional opportunity to look at some reading and writing. If this unit is being taught to slightly older children (KS2), then we suggest you teach the whole PowerPoint and use all of the worksheets provided.