



# LANGUAGE FOR ALL: CREATING LGBTQIA+ INCLUSIVE ELE CLASSROOMS

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## Making Materials Inclusive:

### Why it Matters, Practical Tips, and Examples

#### **What Does LGBTQIA+ Inclusivity Mean in Education?**

Inclusivity for LGBTQIA+ learners means creating an environment where individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or other non-heteronormative identities are:

- welcomed
- respected
- supported
- reflected in the learning space

It involves recognising the diversity of experiences within the LGBTQIA+ community while ensuring safety, equitable treatment, and opportunities for full participation.

LGBTQIA+ learners deserve to see themselves represented in:

- learning materials
- classroom discussions
- visuals and posters around the school
- examples used in grammar and vocabulary teaching

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#### **Why Representation Matters**

Research shows that transgender and gender-nonconforming youth experience particularly high rates of:

- bullying
- absenteeism
- dropping out
- poor mental health

When learners feel invisible or unsafe, learning becomes far more difficult — emotionally and academically.

Representation, therefore, is not just about diversity. It is about learner wellbeing and long-term success.



## **How Can Teachers Build More Inclusive Language Classrooms?**

Inclusivity is an ongoing practice. Here are some key approaches, the first two of which are at the heart of the communicative approach to language teaching:

1. *Get to Know Your Students:* Build trust, listen, and learn about the identities and experiences students bring into the classroom.
2. *Promote a Positive Learning Environment:* Establish classroom norms based on respect, openness, and empathy.
3. *Anticipate and Navigate Sensitive Topics:* Sensitive issues may arise — teachers can prepare to challenge bias thoughtfully and calmly.
4. *Use Gender-Neutral Language:* Avoid assumptions about identity based on appearance or name.
  - Use they/them when pronouns are unknown
  - Ask students for their preferred pronouns when appropriate
  - Normalise inclusive language as part of everyday classroom practice

## **Practical Strategies for Inclusion**

### **Lower Levels**

At beginner and intermediate levels, inclusion can be embedded through everyday teaching choices:

- Choose readings and listening texts with LGBTQIA+ representation
- Regularly replace heteronormative coursebook images in a variety of lessons to include a variety of families and identities. Ensure further inclusivity by doing so in various topics (family titles, job titles, hobbies, etc)
- Teach gender-neutral family and job titles
- Introduce singular they naturally
- Include multiple pronoun forms (she/they, he/they) in grammar work

*Most importantly:* ensure students see themselves included. That said, we cannot force learners to reveal their identity.

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### **Higher / Upper Levels**

With more advanced learners, teachers can explore inclusion more deeply:

- Use newspaper articles on equality, representation, and legislation
- Encourage conversations about diversity and inclusion
- Study inclusive films and TV shows
- Continue reinforcing inclusive grammar and vocabulary
- Build on the strategies used at lower levels

At higher levels, the need and ability to advance the dialogue is afforded.

It is worth noting that just because we create inclusive resources and spaces that doesn't necessarily mean that learners must reveal their identities, and it doesn't require educators to reveal theirs either.

## **Potential Lower Level Activity**

If giving a lesson on job title vocabulary, you can easily create an LGBTQIA+ inclusive fill-in-the-blank worksheet for students. For example, the worksheet below uses a variety of she/he/they pronouns in the secondary sentence. It's inclusive, but not to a point that will confuse students. Job titles used in the worksheet are also gender neutral.

*Intended Level:* A1/A2

*Target Language:* Job Titles (doctor, teacher, chef, engineer, artist, nurse, police officer, shop assistant, driver, office worker)

*Time:* 10-12 minutes

## **JOB TITLE VOCABULARY WORKSHEET**

*Word Bank:*

~~doctor~~ • teacher • shop assistant • engineer • artist • driver • police officer • chef • office worker • nurse

Fill in the blanks with the correct job title from the word bank.

Alex is a DOCTOR. They work in a hospital and help sick people.

Sam is a \_\_\_\_\_. She teaches English at a school.

Jordan is a \_\_\_\_\_. He cooks food in a restaurant.

Taylor is an \_\_\_\_\_. They design buildings and bridges.

Morgan is an \_\_\_\_\_. She paints pictures and makes art.

Riley is a \_\_\_\_\_. They help doctors and care for patients.

Casey is a \_\_\_\_\_. He helps keep people safe in the city.

Jamie is a \_\_\_\_\_. They help customers in a clothing store.

Chris is a \_\_\_\_\_. She drives a bus and takes people to work.

Lee is an \_\_\_\_\_. They work at a desk and use a computer.

## **Potential Higher Level Activity.**

If giving a lesson on finding accommodation, you can easily create an LGBTQIA+ inclusive fill-in-the-blank worksheet for students to practice the vocabulary. The worksheet below uses a variety of pronouns (he/she/they), as well as a variety of family identities and individuals that make up a household. As stated earlier, higher levels are able to manage the grammar and sentence structure that facilitates exploration of inclusivity. Additionally, there are follow-on discussion questions for the lesson which help facilitate open discussion and gives space for students to share their own experiences and identities, without forcing them into opening up if not ready.

*Intended Level:* B1/B2+

*Target Language:* Finding Accommodation (landlord, flatmates, deposit, lease, furnished, utilities, affordable, neighbourhood, short-term, viewings)

*Time:* 10-12 minutes

### **ACCOMMODATION VOCABULARY WORKSHEET**

*Word Bank:*

landlord • flatmates • deposit • lease • furnished • utilities • ~~affordable~~ • neighbourhood • short-term • viewings

Complete the sentences using the correct word or phrase from the word bank.

Mark and Elena are a married couple looking for an AFFORDABLE apartment because their budget is limited.

Alex and their partner want to sign a \_\_\_\_\_ for one year so they feel secure in their new city.

Before moving in, Jamal pays a \_\_\_\_\_ to protect the owner in case of damage.

The \_\_\_\_\_ agrees to repair the washing machine after Sam reports the problem.

Priya prefers a \_\_\_\_\_ flat because she is moving from another country with only two suitcases.

Jordan lives with three \_\_\_\_\_, including a close friend and two people they met online.

The rent does not include \_\_\_\_\_, so Lee and his boyfriend pay extra for electricity and heating.

Ana and Sofia want to live in a quiet \_\_\_\_\_ that feels safe and welcoming.

Chris and they are searching for \_\_\_\_\_ accommodation while they look for full-time work.

A group of friends attend several \_\_\_\_\_ before deciding which apartment to share.

## Follow-Up Discussion Questions – Finding Accommodation

- Have you ever shared a home with friends, a partner, or people you didn't know before? What was easy or difficult about it?
- Do you prefer living alone, with a partner, or with flatmates? Why?
- What is most important to you when choosing accommodation (price, location, safety, space, neighbours, etc.)?
- Have you ever had a good or bad experience with a landlord? What happened?
- Is it easy or difficult to find affordable housing in your city or country? Why?
- Would you feel comfortable telling a landlord about your partner or family situation? Why or why not?
- What questions do you think are important to ask during a viewing?
- Have you ever lived in a short-term place (for work, study, or travel)? How was the experience?
- What makes a neighbourhood feel safe and welcoming to you?
- If you could choose your ideal living situation, what would it look like?

