

Looking for a simple, high-impact activity that gets students speaking from minute one? This family speaking practice is one of the **best activities for world language class**. It focuses on everyday vocabulary, builds confidence, and gives every student a chance to talk about people they know using meaningful, personalised language.

What this activity achieves

The goal is to help students produce complete, accurate phrases about family members while practicing pronunciation, sentence structure and quick recall. It works for beginner to intermediate levels and can be adapted to any language. Use it to reinforce vocabulary like mother, father, sibling, aunt, uncle, cousin and to practice verbs such as to have, to be, to live, to like.

Materials and setup

- List of family vocabulary on the board or a single handout
- Prompt cards with sentence starters (optional)
- Timer or stopwatch
- Space for students to pair up or form small groups

Suggested sentence starters

- **My mother is called...**
- **I have one brother and two cousins.**
- **My grandparents live in...**
- **I get along with my...**

Step-by-step procedure

1. Model the activity with a confident student or volunteer. Speak slowly and naturally and show how to add detail.
2. Give students 2 minutes to prepare notes or choose 3 family facts they want to say.
3. Pair students. Each student has one minute to speak while the partner listens and takes a simple note about one thing they heard.
4. Swap roles. After both have spoken, pairs share one interesting fact they heard

about their partner with another pair or the whole class.

5. Repeat the cycle, gradually encouraging longer sentences or added detail like ages, occupations or hobbies.

Variations to keep it fresh

- Speed rounds: 30 seconds per speaker to encourage fluency.
- Role play: students act as different family members and answer questions.
- Picture prompts: show family photos and have students describe relationships.
- Information gap: each partner has different facts and must ask questions to complete a family tree.

Assessment and feedback

Use a simple checklist: vocabulary use, sentence accuracy, pronunciation, and willingness to speak. Offer one specific compliment and one small correction per student. This activity also works as a formative assessment to identify common grammar errors to review in the next lesson.

Final tips

- Keep the pace lively to reduce anxiety.
- Celebrate effort over perfection.
- Rotate partners so students hear different accents and styles.
- Adapt prompts to cultural contexts and students' family structures.

Looking for more ideas?

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