

# LESSON PLAN - Communicative Adjectives: Talking Blood Types in the Classroom

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## Overview

Communicative activities that are highly stimulating are always welcome in the language classroom. Creating activities which are culturally bound, relevant to the students' immediate social environment, as well as possess the flexibility to account for a wide range of levels with minimum preparation are few and far between. The lesson presented here uses a simple, high-interest, culturally relevant concept which will allow students to communicate ideas and opinions, have fun, and get to know each other better whilst at the same time expand their vocabulary. I have been using this lesson for about eight years with a variety of students in a variety of situations. It has always served me well with all student feedback being positive in nature. At KUIS I have incorporated this activity into my EIC1 class as a general icebreaker activity with new freshman and in my IC Writing class when constructing descriptive paragraphs. Especially within the writing class it refreshed the students' motivation as it moves the focus away from the more tiresome structural elements of paragraph construction and development. At the same time it is great for getting students to remember how to write topic sentences, main ideas and supporting sentences. This lesson is based on a strong core theme with which all students will be familiar, features only three sheets of A4, and can last for 90 minutes. At the same time, it gives the teacher maximum flexibility to modify the lesson without being overly prescriptive in nature.

## Preparation

The teacher will need to prepare a copy of the three single page handouts for each student. The handouts are printed on pages 13 and 14, and can also be downloaded from my website at <http://www.eapstudy.com/lesson/bloodtyping.html>. The handouts are intended to be used as single pages so it would be better not to double side or staple them when preparing for the lesson. In addition to the suggested deployment below these materials can be used in a number of different ways depending on student ability and time constraints (e.g., introducing adjectives in general / cutting out character definitions and using them like a quiz / cultural comparison of character assessment). It may also benefit the teacher, especially in lower level classes, to compile a list of commonly used adjectives with Japanese translations, although I do not advocate this within a communicative classroom and I have only ever done this with mature learners. There are much more productive ways of conveying meaning to the students than simple word for word translations.

## Deployment Stage 1

The teacher should begin by writing a general heading on the whiteboard such as '*Character Assessment*' or '*Personality Types*'. The students should then be invited to comment on what they think they are going to talk about. The teacher must now try and elicit information from the group (e.g., *what sort of class they are expecting, what character assessment is, how character can be measured, what type of characters there are, what type of character they have, what personality is, etc*). If the students warm to the concept quickly, the teacher can invite them to suggest some ways in which a person's character can be predicted. At this point a student will usually mention one of the key points - Blood Type, Horoscope or

the Chinese calendar. If the students are not so quick to latch on to these ideas the teacher should drop a few hints until they do. This elicitation is great skill-based English practice and is a valued part of the class. I would suggest that after 10-15 minutes the teacher should have something along the lines of the following written on the whiteboard:

Character Assessment / Personality Types

- Blood Types (A, AB, B, O)
- Horoscope (Birth Month)
- Chinese Calendar (Birth Year)

Character Assessment / Personality Types

It is vital to tell the student not to reveal their Blood Type, Horoscope or Chinese birth year to their classmates. All personal information should be kept a secret at this time and the teacher will have to stress this to the students in order for the lesson to be enjoyable.

### Deployment Stage 2

The teacher should now inform the students that they will be using one of these systems to assess their classmates' characters (*this usually brings many nervous smiles and increases anticipation and suspense*). The teacher should first give the students the handout entitled *BLOODTYPE 1* and ask them to try to form an image of a stereotypical character based upon the different blood types. The teacher can assist students by giving them an additional list of adjectives to stimulate their thought processes or the teacher can ask them to think about how important blood types are in Japan. After about 15 - 20 minutes, students should report their ideas to the class - either spoken aloud by individual students or presented as a group. The teacher or students can also write these ideas on the whiteboard as shown below. Again, the flexibility of this lesson allows the

teacher to change the exact nature of this student presentation.

### Stereotypes of Blood Type & Character

- TYPE A: strong, confident
- TYPE B : selfish, demanding
- TYPE AB : extroverted, happy
- TYPE O : relaxed, out-going

### Deployment Stage 3

After the students have finished reporting their activities, the teacher may wish to comment on the words on the board and check that all students understand each one. This clarification may also need to include some pronunciation work depending on the words produced. The teacher can then elicit some opinions from students on things that they agree or disagree with regarding the information on the whiteboard. After all of the students are clear, the teacher can then present the students with the handout *BLOODTYPE 2*. The students will now enjoy comparing what is written on the whiteboard to the `answers` on the second handout. The teacher can then comment on the similarities and differences between the student stereotypes and the answers on the second handout. This second handout features some difficult adjectives but rather than having students use a dictionary, the outgoing teacher can attempt to act out each adjective, showing the students what stubborn looks like and demonstrating how to be sympathetic, nervous, generous, etc. When all the acting is over it is a good idea to make sure that students are familiar with the Japanese equivalent of each adjective, a few moments looking through their dictionaries usually ensures that understanding will no longer be an issue for the rest of the lesson. This allows students to focus on communicating and expressing opinions rather than worrying about the clarification of meaning. Some general

phrases that I find helpful to introduce at this point are shown below (dependent on class level). It also helps to ask the students to look around the class at their fellow classmates and think about what kind of people are in the class.

- I agree with this because.....
- I disagree with this because.....
- I think that my strongest point is .....
- I think my weakest point is .....
- I would guess that he/she is a .....
- I would guess that he/she is blood type ...

It is also possible to introduce degrees of certainty in more depth and variety (e.g, ***I am positive that he/she is..... or I have no doubt at all that he/she is.....***).

#### Deployment Stage 4

The teacher must now ask all the students to look at the handout BLOODTYPE 2 in order to analyze all of the adjectives used to describe the good character points only. Students will need to be told that they are not limited to any single blood type and that they should look at the whole handout. The students are then instructed to choose five adjectives from the paper that they feel best represent their own good points and rank them from one to five. So for example, if a person thinks that their strongest character good point is kindness, then kindness would be written as number 1; if they think that they are very sensitive, then sensitive would be number 2 and so on until they have a list of their five strongest character points. This list must be kept a secret from the other students, as must their own blood type. The teacher should give the students the handout BLOODTYPE 3 for them to write down their top five good points (the top left portion of the third handout). When all of the students have written down their top five good points they need to find a partner. Putting

people together who do not usually work together is a good idea. The teacher will then tell the students to sit opposite their partner. Whilst still hiding the paper, the students must ascertain the top five good points about their partner by making statements as outlined above. A typical scenario would go:

**STUDENT A:** I would guess that you are a generous person.

**STUDENT B:** Yes, I am a generous person. That is my 4th best point.

Or

**STUDENT A:** I am sure that you are an outgoing person.

**STUDENT B:** Sorry, I am not an outgoing person.

If the guess is correct, then student A will write down generous in the 4th place on the list of their partner's good points (top right portion of the third handout). It is then the turn of student B to make a statement. This continues until one of the students guesses all five of the partner's answers. A student who has all five correct answers can then have the chance to guess the partner's blood type based on the five good points attained. At this point the teacher can declare a winner and a loser and ask students whether they believe that blood types are a good way to judge a person's character.

When the class has finished this activity the teacher should have them sit opposite a new partner- pairing the winners with winners and the losers with losers works well. The teacher should then tell the students to repeat the same steps again but this time they are to choose their top five bad points. This creates an atmosphere of excitement and fear with student exchanges typically going like this:

**STUDENT A:** I am positive that you are a *stubborn* person.

**STUDENT B:** No, I am not *stubborn* at all, why do you think that ?

Or

**STUDENT A:** I guess that you are a *lazy* person.

**STUDENT B:** Yes, I am a lazy person, how did you know that ?

Repeat the steps above when all students have finished the second part of the activity. When the students focus on the top five bad points it is always great fun, especially if students who do not know each other so well are paired together as they are reluctant to criticize their classmate.

As a final lesson closer the students can be asked to guess the teacher's blood type and to shout out some descriptive adjectives from their lists, but expect the worst!

(copies of the activities follow)

## Blood Type & Character



**Blood Type : A** Population : About 34% of the world is Blood Type A

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**Blood Type : B** Population : About 9% of the world is Blood Type B

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**Blood Type : AB** Population : About 4% of the world is Blood Type AB

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**Blood Type : O** Population : About 38% of the world is Blood Type O

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## Blood Type & Character



**Blood Type : A** Population : About 34% of the world is Blood Type A

**GOOD :**  
Obedient, Careful, Sympathetic, Polite, Honest, Loyal, Emotional, Calm, Even-Tempered, Team Player.

**BAD :**  
Very Sensitive, Introverted, Shy, Nervous, Pessimistic, Hesitant, Indecisive and Dislikes to be touched.

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**Blood Type : B** Population : About 9% of the world is Blood Type B

**GOOD :**  
Cheerful, Optimistic, Active, Sensitive, Kind, Sociable, Entertaining, Humorous.

**BAD :**  
Forgetful, Unorganized, Noisy, Egocentric, Selfish, Individualistic and Likes to get one's own way.

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**Blood Type : AB** Population : About 4% of the world is Blood Type AB

**GOOD :**  
Social, Easy-going, Sympathetic, Diplomatic, Outgoing, Laid-back, Creative, Artistic, Flexible and Compelling.

**BAD :**  
Unpredictable, Moody, Aloof, Get bored easily, Mysterious and Dislikes to be touched.

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**Blood Type : O** Population : About 38% of the world is Blood Type O

**GOOD :**  
Confident, Strong-Willed, Proud, Dedicated, Sociable, Energetic, Extroverted, Frank, Realist, Showy, Flighty, Generalist, Positive, Independent.

**BAD :**  
Risk-Takers, Dislike taking orders, Insecure, Stubborn, May have short attention span.