

Introduction to Duckopolis

First of all, thank you for your interest in this ARL core module. I created it to help you add a new and exciting dimension to your classroom and give you ideas for fresh ways of presenting language challenges to your students.

The idea of ARL kits began several years ago in a small country school in rural Indiana. Many of my students grew up in this school system and knew each other almost as well as their own brothers and sisters. The students felt silly asking each other their names or the names of their siblings or how old they were as they practiced introductory language skills.

Several years ago, I taught at a much larger school so introductions and talking about basic information about students was not an issue. The students didn't usually know everyone in the room, and they were used to meeting new people at school.

But in this country school, even many of the "new" students had been in the school previously so most students knew them.

I began to wonder what would happen if suddenly all my students forgot that they knew each other. How would that change my classroom?

Then I thought of a way of bringing "new students" into the room. Alternate realities.

Okay, yes, I've been a fan of science fiction for many years so I like considering alternate realities and what things might be like "if only." What if all of a sudden I was teaching a group of total strangers?

The first thing I knew that needed to happen with my students was a new identity. They needed to have a new persona, one that nobody else in the room knew about, one we could discuss in the target language and learn about as a class. As we'd start to get to know these "new" people, it would open up a world of possibilities that we could never have with regular students in a regular class. These "new" students could be anything, from anywhere, and do things my students could never do.

Part of the fun of ARLs is creating this new persona for the student to identify with. Once we establish the persona, then we set about creating stories to give these characters a background. When it's all done in the target language, it adds up to an enjoyable way for students to learn to use the language.

This kit provides the basics to start, but where you can go from there depends only on your own creativity and that of your students. The possibilities are endless!