

What's My Line?

Level: Pre-Intermediate & Up

Video: What's My Line - Arlene Dahl <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bd9CMW07ngE>

Objective: Yes/No question structures
Present Perfect vs. Present Simple

Plan: Ask the question “what do you do?” Ask the students if they know any other ways to say this. After they come up with a few, tell them that another one is “What's your line of work?” or “What line of work are you in?”

Now tell the students you are going to show them a video clip. Tell them you want them to identify what kind of show it is (a game show). What's My Line is the longest running game show in TV history. Usually a random person was brought in and the panelists (who were usually the same) had to ask yes/no questions to identify what the guest's line of work was. If they received a no answer, it would move on to the next panelist. After 10 negative answers, the game was over. There was also a special segment to this game show where they brought on a famous guest, usually from show business. For this, the mystery guest usually used a fake voice and the panelists were blindfolded so as not to give the game away.

Split the class into two groups. Tell one group they have to write down all the present perfect questions. Another group has to write down all the present simple questions. Play the clip a second time and have the groups switch with each other and check. If necessary, spend some time comparing the question forms and asking students why a particular tense is used.

This video prepares the class quite nicely for that old TEFL classic Who Am I? Before class, prepare a bunch of names of famous people that the students will know. It's usually best to mix celebrities from the students' country up with some from Hollywood or elsewhere. I like to throw in ones that will get a laugh. In Turkey that would be people like Bulent Ersoy, Recep Ivedik, or Ibrahim Tatlis. I also like to put myself as one of the “famous people”. That also usually gets a laugh. **FYI:** Bülent Ersoy had a sex change and is sort of a joke in Turkey. Don't put her on a student's back unless you know they won't be offended.

You can play the game in two ways. The first way would be to play it just like the game show. A student comes up and you hand them a person and you go around the room asking yes/no questions to find out who the person is. The only additional rule is that the question must be grammatically correct or they also lose a point.

The other way to do it is to actually tape the names onto the backs of the students and have them walk around the room asking each other questions. In this version the only two rules are 1) It has to be a yes/no question and 2) They can only ask each person in the class two questions (otherwise it loses the mingle element).

Some other useful language to highlight could be “I would say it would vary.” “May I assume...” “Can I take a stab at this?” (and the literal jokes that follow) “That's three down and seven to go.” “I wouldn't want to be accused of prying, but...” “Maybe it'll be just as much off base.”

Script

1. Are you in the entertainment world?
2. Are you in show business rather than sports?
3. Are you an actress?
4. Have you ever been in the motion picture business?
5. Have you also been on the stage?
6. Would you say you are better known for your work on the screen than for on the stage?
7. Are you the leading lady type?
8. Do you play in straight movies and plays rather than musical comedies?
9. You can sing and dance as well as act in other words?
10. May I assume that Southern accent is put on to defraud us?
11. You really are geographically from the South of somewhere?
12. Do you sing?
13. Do you sing more than you dance?
14. Have you been in a picture that's played in these here parts in the last year or so?
15. Were you the heroine that the fella got in the end?
16. Are you blond?
17. Are you brunette?
18. If you're not green or white, then you must be red-headed, is that it?
19. Are you at this present time making a picture at West Point?
20. I wouldn't want to be accused of prying, but is that red hair natural?
21. Have you ever appeared in a picture with Bob Hope?
22. Have you ever appeared in a picture with John Payne?
23. Can I take a stab at this?
24. Do you have any other interests...do you have some business that isn't show business?
25. Does it involve something terribly alluring like nighties and things like that?
26. Are you Arlene Dahl?

Bulent Ersoy

Sezen Aksu

Tom Cruise

Paris Hilton

Angelina Jolie

Britney Spears

David Beckham

Madonna

Johnny Depp

Justin Timberlake

Cem Yilmaz

Recep Ivedik

Beyaz Ozturk

Your Teacher

Brad Pitt

50 Cent

Barack Obama

Ibrahim Tatlis

Arnold Schwarzenegger